A Physician's Anthology

Lydia M. Rundell

A Physician's Anthology
of
English and American Poetry

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A Physician's Anthology of English and American Poetry

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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR WILLIAM OSLER

FOREWORD

THIS volume was originally intended as a birthday tribute to Sir William Osler by one of his old Montreal students and by another American 'pupil' in a far different sense. Too late for the festal ceremonies in honour of his seventieth birthday, it was in the hands of the publishers when less than five months later (December 29, 1919), the 'Chief' was taken from us; but the verses herein collected had already passed through his hands and met with his approval.

What Osler meant to the medical profession in America, what he did for us, can never be adequately expressed. *Omne individuum ineffabile.* And his was an individuality so rare, so warm and radiant with goodwill toward his fellow creatures, that we shall scarcely look upon his like again. He was handsome, wise, witty, learned, courteous, fair-minded and brave; with the poet whom he most resembled in happy disposition, he might have said:

> To me Fate gave, whate'er she else denied,
> A nature sloping to the sunny side.

Through his professional affiliation with Great Britain, Canada, and the United States, he was in a very unique and personal way the great liaison officer of the Anglo-Saxon profession, a bond between English-speaking physicians

everywhere. His position in the history of medicine is based upon genuine scientific achievement, learning of the most rare and varied kind, and original contributions to medical literature based upon a bedside and hospital experience so extensive that it has been described by one of his compeers as 'almost illimitable'. Osler's biographical and historical addresses have been well described as belonging to 'the literature of power', the kind of literature that profoundly influences people in the conduct of their lives. What made him, in a very real sense, the ideal physician, the essential humanist of modern medicine, was his wonderful genius for friendship toward all and sundry; and, consequent upon this trait, his large, cosmopolitan spirit, his power of composing disputes and differences, of making peace upon the high places, of bringing about 'Peace, Unity, and Concord' among his professional colleagues. 'Wherever Osler went', says one of his best pupils, 'the charm of his personality brought men together; for the good in all men he saw, and as friends of Osler, all men met in peace.'[1]

To summarize the traits in Osler's character which made him so ideally the 'Beloved Physician' would require some such happy phrase as Liszt applied to Schubert—*le musicien le plus poète que jamais*. Through his Cornish ply, the Celt in his composition, Osler was assuredly *le médecin le plus poète que jamais*. The test lies in the simple fact that those whom he honoured and uplifted by his

[1] Professor William S. Thayer.

friendship conceived for him an affection such as is accorded to few men; for not only did his personality suggest how close is the kinship of the temperament of the great physician with that of the poet and the artist; but there was in his kindly, humorous smile, his vivacious and withal utterly unpretentious nature, something which kept constantly floating before our eyes the *ineffable aurore*—

And on that countenance bright
Shone oft so high a light—

so high a light that one had inevitably the perception of a finer side of life than is commonly afforded in our ordinary workaday experience. This was the great secret of his hold upon young people. So cheerful, elastic and buoyant was his nature that like the beloved of the gods he seemed predestined to die young. In the words of Professor Gulland of Edinburgh:

'He would always have the young people about him, and his keen sympathy and affection enabled him to enter into their joys and sorrows, and kept him young in defiance of his years. In every man he saw, and desired to see, only what was best and so brought out the best in those with whom he had to deal. One left him with the sense of moral uplift and a desire to be more worthy of his confidence and esteem. To his friends he was always the same. I don't know what he was to his enemies—I doubt if he ever had one! . . . Valuable though his writings are, one would rather have had an hour's talk with Osler than all his books. It was his personality and his personal radiation which gave him the immense power for good which he possessed. He seemed to exercise this only half-consciously; he was too humble-minded to value himself as we valued him.'

In the same key, Sir Clifford Allbutt says of Osler:

'The most modest of men, his conversation was always of the good work of others, silent on his own.'

And of our loss, Sir Humphrey Rolleston adds:

'It is indeed hard to believe that never again shall we see that familiar figure and that the voice of that blithe spirit with its humorous and kindly touches is for ever silent.'

Of Osler in his prime, the Osler of the Johns Hopkins Hospital wards, let Professor Thayer speak:

'At seven he rose; breakfast before eight. At a few minutes before nine he entered the hospital door. After a morning greeting to the superintendent, humming gaily, with arm passed through that of his assistant, he started with brisk, springing step down the corridor towards the wards. The other arm, if not waving gay or humorous greetings to nurses or students as they passed, was thrown around the neck or passed through the arm of another colleague or assistant, and by the time the ward was reached, the little group had generally grown like a small avalanche.

'The visit over, to the private ward. For the many convalescent, or the nervous invalid whose mind needed diversion from self, some lively, droll greeting or absurd remark or preposterous and puzzling invention, and away to the next in an explosion of merriment, often amid the laughing but vain appeals of the patient for an opportunity to retaliate. For those who were gravely ill, few words, but a charming and reassuring manner. Then, running the gauntlet of a group of friends or colleagues or students or assistants, all with problems to discuss, he escaped. How? Heaven only knows! . . . He escaped as by magic, but so graciously, so engagingly that, despair though one might, he could hardly be irritated. No one could speak

consecutively to Osler against his will. How did he do it? I know not.'

A personality of this kind, combining the spiritual gravity of Pasteur or Lister with the engaging humanity of Astley Cooper or Ludwig, Syme or Dieulafoy, is rare in medicine. To possess it is, in itself, a kind of genius.

Though he never wrote verse, it happened that, through the spoken and written word, Osler awakened in his pupils and colleagues a keen interest in what President Gilman once called 'our heritage of English poetry' even where it has been seemingly obliterated by the dull grind of daily life. 'In most men', Sainte Beuve tells us, 'there is a poet who dies young while the rest of the man survives.' Many physicians and medical graduates (*les évadés de la médecine*) have been admirable poets, from Thomas Lodge (of Shakespeare's Rosalind) to the present Laureate, Dr. Robert Bridges. Among the earlier men, Goldsmith, Akenside, Garth, Blackmore, Haller, Werlhof, have the true sober-sided eighteenth-century flavour. Schiller stands between the old régime and the new order of things. Keats, Holmes, Weir Mitchell, Sir Ronald Ross, Henry Head, and John McCrae are bright names among the moderns. In the *Parnasse médical français*, compiled by that able medical historian, Achille Chéreau, there seems to be only one copy of verses worthy of citation, namely those of Philippe Ricord, who practised a speciality which has only just become mentionable to the 'ears polite' of our own generation. This dizain is unique of its kind. It

has the Latin pessimism, the curious dualism of the French mind in regard to the supposed relations of the body and the soul, and the elusive, spiritual quality of French verse at its best.

Quand j'aurai fini ma carrière,
S'il me reste un peu de poussière
De cette triste humanité,
Que le tombeau seul s'en empare,
Et que de mon âme se sépare,
Cette cause de mes douleurs ;
Car l'âme pure et sans matière
Doit être un rayon de lumière,
Qui ne troubleront plus les pleurs.

The present collection is devoted neither to poetry by medical men nor to poems on medical subjects. Verses by medical men seldom rise above a certain level. Poems on medical themes, such as those of Flaubert's friend, Louis Bouilhet, usually turn out to be the dry, uninspiring products of a chimera disporting itself *in vacuo*. Studies of both species have been made now and then, from the *De medicis poetis* (1669) of the Danish anatomist, Thomas Bartholinus, to the charming volume recently published by Dr. Charles L. Dana (New York). Dr. Harvey Cushing has a unique collection of poems by medical men. The late Dr. Robert Fletcher, of Washington, had one of the choicest collections of English and American verse in existence. But practising physicians have usually no active interest in poetry ; it may be for the reason given by Sainte Beuve, or where the viewpoint is not material, from sheer lack of leisure. Yet medicine touches human life on every side, and there is

hardly any 'state of soul' in the lives of men, women and children, which does not some time come under the observation of the physician, as the natural confidant, counsellor, and friend of his patients. In this relation, it is given him to be, as Wordsworth said of the poet himself, 'the rock of defence for human nature', and here Wordsworth's magnificent defence of poetry is again apposite:

'The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure, but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and inalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow beings. The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes it and loves it in his solitude. The Poet, singing a song in which all human beings may join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is on the countenance of all science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after". He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs; in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time.'

This collection is based upon the theory of Goethe that the only inspired poem is the short 'occasional poem'. The finest poetic thoughts are things of momentary clair-

voyance, fleeting, elusive, to be apprehended only by the *raptim* of the natural artist. There have been, indeed, sustained flights of sublime utterance, as in Milton or Wordsworth, and wonderful feats of artistry and architectonics, as in Keats or Swinburne, but *Morte d'Arthur*, *St. Agnes' Eve*, *Tintern Abbey*, *Empedocles*, or *The Altar of Righteousness* are *ouvrages de longue haleine* and require amplitudes of leisure. They cannot be grasped in the briefer, idle moments. Relying then upon the poems with the true 'lyrical cry', and leaving the longer pieces to the leisured cognoscenti, the design of this collection is made apparent by its arrangement.

Assume a young physician, of good upbringing, and with the kind of liberal education which his calling requires. Some of the emotional experiences reflected in these poems will be inevitably his, as he passes through life, or he will observe them in others, in his professional experience. The effect of medical training upon the individual is peculiar, in that it frequently gives a materialistic bias to the mind. But the effect of medical experience in practice, the constant familiarity with all modes of human suffering, is different. If it does not make the doctor right-hearted and high-minded, then he will fall short of the old Greek standard set by the Father of Medicine—that rectitude of mind and character is essential to the making of a good physician. Medicine is almost inevitably a matter of ethical relations and of treading the path of duty. It is, in some relations, far from a pleasant profession, yet the physician must always cultivate cheerfulness, good humour

and that goodwill toward his fellow creatures which alone 'makes insight'. Dealing, as he does, daily and hourly with all forms of physical and mental suffering, the doctor cannot consciously adopt loose morals or frivolous standards without losing caste, even within the tribunal of his own conscience. In spite of smoking-room jests, and the large humorous perception of life required of him, his patients alone, in their helplessness and misery, will constantly remind him that 'want of decency shows want of sense'. *Quand notre mérite baisse notre goût baisse aussi.*

The late Dr. Weir Mitchell, in *Characteristics*, has outlined a segment of human experience which is almost inevitable in the life of any well-poised young physician, to whom it is one of the essentials of his calling that his mind should work apart, in a certain isolation and detachment.

'In early manhood, I was shy, reserved, and self-conscious. . . . About the time I began to like scientific study, I lost for life the sense of ennui which had been one of the peculiarities of my childhood. . . . My long absence abroad enabled me usefully to escape from many of the narrowing associations of my youth, and to enter on life untrammelled. I found, indeed, as I grew older, that the comrades of my youth were no longer such. I had moved away from them; but friendly time brought others whom I learned to love better and with more reason.'

From the beginnings of civilization, physicians have excelled in serious studies. In the generation just past the poets most favoured by them have been those who deal with the ethical and philosophical aspects of life, as Wordsworth, Shelley, Arnold, Clough, Lord Houghton,

and Emerson. Significant is the frequency of citation from Matthew Arnold in the writings of Sir William Osler himself. Why is Arnold's poetry seldom liked by the average successful man? Palgrave, in his Creweian Oration, has given a reason: '*Sonat amorem, philosophiam, pacem lyra ejus: spem non sonat.*' But a good physician's adjustment to life, cheerful, humorous, friendly, in external relations, austere in the background of his mind, is very like Arnold's own account of the poet's Muse:

> Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
> Radiant, adorn'd outside: a hidden ground
> Of thought and of austerity within.

For various reasons, specifically humorous, religious, or erotic verses are as much out of place in this collection as the bacchanalian or didactic species. Facetious verse is usually trivial enough to wear out its welcome on a second or third reading. Actual collections of such verse are not infrequently tiresome, since the essence of the humorous is, in Stendhal's dictum, *le clarté et l'imprévu*, and we do not get the necessary effect of the unexpected in a deadly collection made of malice aforethought. Devotional poetry, from Crashaw to Christina Rossetti, has its followers, but its appreciation implies an emotional act of faith, and in the expression of such emotions our later poetry is excelled, in simplicity and beauty, by the Psalms or the Latin hymns of the earlier ages of faith, as all sacred poetry is surpassed by sacred music. Even here, the human mind is an unreliable instrument of expression. The childlike Mozart

succeeded in expressing the emotional content of Christianity in the *Ricordare* and the *Confutatis* of his Requiem, where even the great Beethoven failed in the *Missa Solemnis*.

James Sully, in his *Memories*, has a delightful anecdote. It was his habit, in company with other congenial spirits, to devote his Sundays to walking tours, shepherded by Leslie Stephen. On one occasion the pedestrians were 'pulled up by a gentleman who had the look of a lay preacher'.

He politely addressed one of our group, a mathematician and logician, with the words, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but are you saved?' To which bold inquiry our Tramp replied awkwardly, 'G-God bless my soul, I believe not'. This frankness encouraged the evangelist to add, 'Because, sir, if you are not saved, you will not go to heaven.' This was too much for our logician, who at once made an end of the discussion by declaring that the last remark was 'an identical proposition.'

In erotic, as distinguished from amatory poetry, the ancients have again distanced the moderns. *Epipsychydion*, the Swinburne *Poems and Ballads*, his *Tristram of Lyonesse*, have in them passages of extraordinary beauty, but the total effect is one of unrestrained emotion, and there is truth in Whitman's remark that such poetry rests ultimately upon an hysterical basis. On the terrain within which Sappho and Catullus are supreme, Whitman himself failed from sheer want of taste. Equally ludicrous is the discovery of the fact of sexuality, the sentimental glorification of the criminal and the sexual *soltero*, by our latter-day

novelists. The Latins and the Slavs handle these themes with more *expertise* than the Anglo-Saxons, and the field may be safely left to them.

The physician's calling makes him a realist. If he is to manage patients afflicted with grave diseases, and, it may be, graver wounds, he must master and school his emotions. He cannot afford to be mastered by them. He, of all men, must avoid what Stuart Mill stigmatizes as 'slovenly habits of thought, and subjection of the mind to fears, wishes, and affectations'. To him, the finer strains of English poetry may afford a lithe, perpetual escape from the ugliness of actual life, which has reached its culmination in the recent European war. The gigantic house-breaking scheme of the Prussian hegemony against the rest of the world, which required, as Kipling says, that we should 'go on passing our children through the fiery furnace to Moloch until Moloch is destroyed', has upset all previous calculations, twisted our standards askew, and turned things topsy-turvy. The European war has not only diminished the power of humanity but, like every other great war, it has left humanity in a sadly distraught and demoralized condition. We can at least learn from it, as Sir Clifford Allbutt said of Byzantium, that 'machinery, when it has served its turn, is not scrapped in due time, but endures to the stifling of young ideas and the bondage of young limbs'. Herein lay the crime of the Preussenthum, that, in support of a mechanical system, it deliberately made war upon the young, not only of Germany,

but of all the nations engaged. With such machine-made standards we can never see the Universe, as Pascal has described it, 'in the height and fullness of its majesty'.

Before the war, Osler had been one of the great apostles of internationalism, of peace and comity among the nations. When the test came, his service to his country was man-sized and, in the great struggle, he lost his only son. Had he lived to play his part in the great work of reconstruction and reorganization, we may feel sure that he would have insisted that its success will depend upon the attitude of the old toward the young, that the society of the future belongs to the children of the future.

This collection of verse is dedicated to the memory of the great humanist of modern medicine, the friend, inspirer, and encourager of youth, in whom the poet did not die young.

F. H. G.

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F. H. G.
C. A. W.

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Le mauvais goût mène au crime.

Dico che il mundo è una lega di birbanti contro gli uomini di bene, e di vili contro i generosi.

There is no chance and no anarchy in the universe. All is system and gradation. Every god is there sitting in his sphere. The young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there is he alone with them alone, they pouring on him benedictions and gifts, and beckoning him up to their thrones. On the instant, and incessantly, fall snow-storms of illusions. He fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that, and whose movements and doings he must obey: he fancies himself poor, orphaned, insignificant. The mad crowd drives hither and thither, now furiously commanding this thing to be done, now that. What is he that he should resist their will, and think or act for himself? Every moment new changes and new showers of deceptions to baffle and distract him. And when, by and by, for an instant, the air clears, and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones,—they alone with him alone.

In such a glen, on such a day,
On Pelion, on the grassy ground,
Chiron, the aged Centaur, lay,
The young Achilles standing by,
The Centaur taught him to explore
The mountains; where the glens are dry,
And the tired Centaurs come to rest,
And where the soaking springs abound,
And the straight ashes grow for spears,
And where the hill-goats come to feed,
And the sea-eagles build their nest,
He showed him Phthia far away,
And said: O boy, I taught this lore
To Peleus, in long distant years!
He told him of the Gods, the stars,
The tides;—and then of mortal wars,
And of the life which heroes lead
Before they reach the Elysian place
And rest in the immortal mead;
And all the wisdom of his race.

I

YOUTH AND MANHOOD

O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

Song from 'Twelfth Night'

WHEN that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gates,
For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came, alas! to wive,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
By swaggering could I never thrive,
For the rain it raineth every day

But when I came unto my beds,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,
For the rain it raineth every day.

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

'It is not growing like a tree'

IT is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

BEN JONSON.

Sonnet

On his having arrived at the Age of Twenty-three

HOW soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom show'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean, or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

JOHN MILTON.

Carpe Diem

YOUTH, that pursuest with such eager pace
Thy even way,
Thou pantest on to win a mournful race:
Then stay! oh, stay!

Pause and luxuriate in thy sunny plain;
Loiter,—enjoy:
Once past, Thou never wilt come back again,
A second Boy.

The hills of Manhood wear a noble face,
When seen from far;
The mist of light from which they take their grace
Hides what they are.

The dark and weary path those cliffs between
Thou canst not know,
And how it leads to regions never-green,
Dead fields of snow.

Pause, while thou mayst, nor deem that fate thy gain,
Which, all too fast,
Will drive thee forth from this delicious plain,
A Man at last.

R. Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton.

Youth's Agitations

WHEN I shall be divorced, some ten years hence,
From this poor present self which I am now;
When youth has done its tedious vain expense
Of passions that for ever ebb and flow;
Shall I not joy youth's heats are left behind,
And breathe more happy in an even clime?
Ah no! for then I shall begin to find
A thousand virtues in this hated time.
Then I shall wish its agitations back
And all its thwarting currents of desire;
Then I shall praise the heat which then I lack,
And call this hurrying fever, generous fire,
And sigh that one thing only has been lent
To youth and age in common—discontent.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Birthdays

'TIME is the stuff of life'—then spend not thy days while they last
In dreams of an idle future, regrets for a vanished past;
The tombstones lie thickly behind thee, but the stream still hurries thee on,
New worlds of thought to be traversed, new fields to be fought and won.
Let work be thy measure of life—then only the end is well—
The birthdays we hail so blithely are strokes of the passing bell.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

The Flight of Youth

THERE are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain:
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again.

We are stronger, and are better,
Under manhood's sterner reign:
Still we feel that something sweet
Followed youth, with flying feet,
And will never come again.

Something beautiful is vanished,
And we sigh for it in vain:
We behold it everywhere,
On the earth, and in the air,
But it never comes again!

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

Aladdin

WHEN I was a beggarly boy,
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp;
When I could not sleep for cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded, with roofs of gold,
My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,
I have money and power good store,
But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright,
For the one that is mine no more.
Take, Fortune, whatever you choose;
You gave, and may snatch again;
I have nothing 'twould pain me to lose,
For I own no more castles in Spain!

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

Ad Matrem

IT is not yours, O mother, to complain,
Not, mother, yours to weep,
Though nevermore your son again
Shall to your bosom creep,
Though nevermore again you watch your baby sleep.

Though in the greener paths of earth,
Mother and child, no more
We wander; and no more the birth
Of me whom once you bore
Seems still the brave reward that once it seemed of yore,

Though as all passes, day and night,
The seasons and the years,
From you, O mother, this delight,
This also disappears—
Some profit yet survives of all your pangs and tears.

AD MATREM

The child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born
In season fit, and still
Each must in strength arise to work the almighty will.

So from the hearth the children flee,
By that almighty hand
Austerely led; so one by sea
Goes forth, and one by land;
Nor aught of all man's sons escapes from that command.

So from the sally each obeys
The unseen almighty nod;
So till the ending all their ways
Blindfolded loth have trod;
Nor knew their task at all, but were the tools of God.

And as the fervent smith of yore
Beat out the glowing blade,
Nor wielded in the front of war
The weapons that he made,
But in the tower at home still plied his ringing trade;

So like a sword the son shall roam
On nobler missions sent;
And as the smith remained at home
In peaceful turret pent,
So sits the while at home the mother well content.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Life is Struggle

TO wear out heart, and nerves, and brain,
And give oneself a world of pain;
Be eager, angry, fierce, and hot,
Imperious, supple—God knows what,
For what 's all one to have or not;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
For 'tis not joy, it is not gain,
It is not in itself a bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us all alive.

To say we truly feel the pain,
And quite are sinking with the strain;—
Entirely, simply, undeceived,
Believe, and say we ne'er believed
The object, e'en were it achieved,
A thing we e'er had cared to keep;
With heart and soul to hold it cheap,
And then to go and try it again;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
O, 'tis not joy, and 'tis not bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us still alive.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

Early Death and Fame

FOR him who must see many years,
I praise the life which slips away
Out of the light and mutely; which avoids
Fame, and her less fair followers, envy, strife,
Stupid detraction, jealousy, cabal,
Insincere praises; which descends
The quiet mossy track to age.

But, when immature death
Beckons too early the guest
From the half-tried banquet of life,
Young, in the bloom of his days;
Leaves no leisure to press,
Slow and surely, the sweets
Of a tranquil life in the shade;
Fuller for him be the hours!
Give him emotion, though pain!
Let him live, let him feel: *I have lived!*
Heap up his moments with life,
Triple his pulses with fame!

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Will

O WELL for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long:
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crowned.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows through acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still!
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

The Portrait

WITH swift, bold strokes the portrait grows—
Most swiftly at its birth;
And soon the outlined forms disclose
Its meaning and its worth.

For chiefly in his first designs
The artist's skill is shown;
Though blending hues and finer lines
Add beauty, force, and tone.

So youth with rapid pencil draws
A life, for good or ill,
And forms its habits and its laws,
The bias of its will.

With changing tints the canvas glows—
Life's fervours soon are past;
But lines most lightly drawn are those
Which often longest last.

We cannot turn the blotted page
Or cleanse the tainted source:
Youth sows the seed; we reap in Age
Its honour or remorse.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

The Earth and Man

A LITTLE sun, a little rain,
A soft wind blowing from the west—
And woods and fields are sweet again
And warmth within the mountain's breast.

So simple is the earth we tread,
So quick with love and life her frame,
Ten thousand years have dawned and fled,
And still her magic is the same.

A little love, a little trust,
A soft impulse, a sudden dream,—
And life as dry as desert dust
Is fresher than a mountain stream.

So simple is the heart of man,
So ready for new hope and joy;
Ten thousand years since it began
Have left it younger than a boy.

STOPFORD AUGUSTUS BROOKE.

II

NATURE

The free winds told him what they knew,
Discoursed of fortune as they blew;
Omens and signs that filled the air
To him authentic witness bare;
The birds brought auguries on their wings,
And carolled undeceiving things
Him to beckon, him to warn;
Well might then the poet scorn
To learn of scribe or courier
Things writ in vaster character;
And on his mind at dawn of day
Soft shadows of the evening lay.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

Stanzas

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me.
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading;
It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

EMILY BRONTË.

'The world is too much with us'

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Chorus from Aristophanes

O LISTEN to me, and so shall you be stout-hearted and fresh as a daisy:
Not ready to chatter on every matter, nor bent over books till you're hazy:
No splitter of straws, no dab at the laws, making black seem white so cunning;
But wandering down outside the town, and over the green meadow running,
Ride, wrestle, and play with your fellows so gay, like so many birds of a feather,
All breathing of youth, good-humour, and truth, in the time of the jolly spring weather,
In the jolly springtime, when the poplar and lime dishevel their tresses together.

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

A Farm Picture

THROUGH the ample open door of the peaceful
country barn,
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding,
And haze and vista, and the far horizon fading away.

WALT WHITMAN.

Smoke

LIGHT-WINGED Smoke, Icarian bird,
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU.

Haze

WOOF of the sun, ethereal gauze,
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye;
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,

Breakers of air, billows of heat,
Fine summer spray on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged,
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without song;
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU.

Mist

LOW-ANCHORED cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain-head and source of rivers,
Dew cloth, dream drapery,
And napkin spread by fays;
Drifting meadow of the air,
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,
And in whose fenny labyrinth
The bittern booms and heron wades;
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU.

The Night-Wind

AYE—there it is! it wakes to-night
Deep feelings I thought dead;
Strong in the blast—quick gathering light—
The heart's flame kindles red.

THE NIGHT-WIND

'Now I can tell by thine altered cheek,
And by thine eyes' full gaze,
And by the words thou scarce dost speak,
How wildly fancy plays.

'Yes—I could swear that glorious wind
Has swept the world aside,
Has dashed its memory from thy mind
Like foam-bells from the tide:

'And thou art now a spirit pouring
Thy presence into all:
The thunder of the tempest's roaring,
The whisper of its fall:

'An universal influence,
From thine own influence free;
A principle of life—intense—
Lost to mortality.

'Thus truly, when that breast is cold,
Thy prisoned soul shall rise;
The dungeon mingle with the mould—
The captive with the skies.
Nature's deep being, thine shall hold,
Her spirit all thy spirit fold,
Her breath absorb thy sighs.
Mortal! though soon life's tale is told,
Who once lives, never dies!'

EMILY BRONTË.

Song

BRING from the craggy haunts of birch and pine,
Thou wild wind, bring
Keen forest odours from that realm of thine.
Upon thy wing!

O wind, O mighty, melancholy wind,
Blow through me, blow!
Thou blowest forgotten things into my mind,
From long ago.

JOHN TODHUNTER.

Morning-Land

OLD English songs, you bring to me
A simple sweetness somewhat kin
To birds that through the mystery
Of earliest morn made tuneful din,
While hamlet steeples sleepily
At cock-crow chime out three and four.
Till maids get up betime and go,
With faces like the red sun low,
Clattering about the dairy floor.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

'There was a Boy'

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;

And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Self-Dependence

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At the vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
'Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end.

'Ah, once more,' I cried, 'ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew:
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!'

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
'Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

'Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

'And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For alone they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

'Bounded by themselves, and unobservant
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see.'

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in my own heart I hear.
'Resolve to be thyself: and know, that he
Who finds himself, loses his misery!'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

To a Skylark

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Larks

ALL day in exquisite air
The song clomb an invisible stair,
Flight on flight, story on story,
Into the dazzling glory.

There was no bird, only a singing,
Up in the glory, climbing and ringing,
Like a small golden cloud at even,
Trembling 'twixt earth and heaven.

I saw no staircase winding, winding,
Up in the dazzle, sapphire and blinding,
Yet round by round, in exquisite air,
The song went up the stair.

KATHARINE TYNAN

Philomela

HARK! ah, the nightingale—
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,

And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Home Thoughts, from Abroad

OH, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Written on a Bridge

WHEN soft September brings again
To yonder gorse its golden glow,
And Snowdon sends its autumn rain
To bid thy current livelier flow;
Amid that ashen foliage light
When scarlet beads are glistering bright
While alder boughs unchanged are seen
In summer livery of green;
When clouds before the cooler breeze
Are flying, white and large; with these
Returning, so may I return,
And find thee changeless, Pont-y-wern!

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

A River Pool

SWEET streamlet basin! at thy side
Weary and faint within me cried
My longing heart,—In such pure deep
How sweet it were to sit and sleep;
To feel each passage from without
Close up,—above me and about,
Those circling waters crystal clear,
That calm impervious atmosphere!
There on thy pearly pavement pure,
To lean, and feel myself secure,
Or through the dim-lit inter-space,
Afar at whiles upgazing trace
The dimpling bubbles dance around
Upon thy smooth exterior face;
Or idly list the dreamy sound
Of ripples lightly flung, above
That home, of peace, if not of love.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

From 'Blank Misgivings'

HOW often sit I, poring o'er
My strange distorted youth,
Seeking in vain, in all my store,
One feeling based on truth;
Amid the maze of petty life
A clue whereby to move,
A spot whereon in toil and strife
To dare to rest and love.

So constant as my heart would be,
  So fickle as it must,
'Twere well for others as for me
  'Twere dry as summer dust.
Excitements come, and act and speech
  Flow freely forth;—but no,
Nor they, nor aught beside can reach
  The buried world below.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

August Weather

DEAD heat and windless air,
  And silence over all;
Never a leaf astir,
  But the ripe apples fall;
Plums are purple-red,
  Pears amber and brown;
Thud! in the garden-bed
  Ripe apples fall down.

Air like a cider-press
  With the bruised apples' scent;
Low whistles express
  Some sleepy bird's content;
Still world and windless sky,
  A mist of heat o'er all;
Peace like a lullaby,
  And the ripe apples fall.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

Autumn Song

NO clouds are in the morning sky,
The vapours hug the stream,—
Who says that life and love can die
In all this northern gleam?
At every turn the maples burn,
The quail is whistling free,
The partridge whirs, and the frosted burs
Are dropping for you and me.
Ho! hilly ho! heigh O!
Hilly ho!
In the clear October morning.

Along our path the woods are bold,
And glow with ripe desire;
The yellow chestnut showers its gold,
The sumachs spread their fire;
The breezes feel as crisp as steel,
The buckwheat tops are red:
Then down the lane, love, scurry again,
And over the stubble tread!
Ho! hilly ho! heigh O!
Hilly ho!
In the clear October morning.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

The Snow-Storm

ANNOUNCED by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.
Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Among the Rocks

OH, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
This autumn morning! How he sets his bones
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet
For the ripple to run over in its mirth;
Listening the while, where on the heap of stones
The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true;
Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and knows.
If you loved only what were worth your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you:
Make the low nature better by your throes!
Give earth yourself, go up for gain above!

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Sea-Limits

CONSIDER the sea's listless chime:
Time's self it is, made audible—
The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Grey and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
  Listen alone among the woods;
  Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee:
  Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
  Surge and sink back and surge again,—
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
  And listen at its lips; they sigh
  The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech.
  And all mankind is thus at heart
  Not anything but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

'In cabin'd ships, at sea'

IN cabin'd ships, at sea,
  The boundless blue on every side expanding,
With whistling winds and music of the waves,—the large
  imperious waves.—In such,
Or some lone bark, buoy'd on the dense marine,
Where, joyous, full of faith, spreading white sails,
She cleaves the ether, mid the sparkle and the foam of
  day, or under many a star at night,
By sailors young and old, haply will I, a reminiscence of
  the land, be read,
In full rapport at last.

'IN CABIN'D SHIPS, AT SEA'

Here are our thoughts,—voyagers' thoughts,
Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by them be said;
The sky o'erarches here,—we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet,
We feel the long pulsation—ebb and flow of endless motion;
The tones of unseen mystery,—the vague and vast suggestions of the briny world,—the liquid-flowing syllables,
The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melancholy rhythm,
The boundless vista, and the horizon far and dim, are all here,
And this is Ocean's poem.

Then falter not, O book! fulfil your destiny!
You, not a reminiscence of the land alone,
You too, as a lone bark, cleaving the ether—purpos'd I know not whither—yet ever full of faith,
Consort to every ship that sails,—sail you!
Bear forth to them, folded, my love—(Dear mariners! for you I fold it here in every leaf;)
Speed on, my Book! spread your white sails, my little bark, athwart the imperious waves!
Chant on,—sail on,—bear o'er the boundless blue, from me, to every shore,
This song for mariners and all their ships.

WALT WHITMAN.

'Where lies the land'

WHERE lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights, when wild north-westers rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

Dover Beach

THE sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits;—on the French coast, the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanched sand,

DOVER BEACH

Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægaean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Child-birth at Sea

THOU god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,
Which wash both heaven and hell; and thou, that hast
Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,
Having call'd them from the deep. O! still
Thy deafening, dreadful thunders; gently quench
Thy nimble, sulphurous flashes. O! how, Lychorida,
How does my queen? Thou stormest venomously;
Wilt thou spit all thyself? The seaman's whistle
Is as a whisper in the ears of death,
Unheard. Lychorida! Lucina, O!
Divinest patroness, and midwife gentle
To those that cry by night, convey thy deity
Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs
Of my queen's travails!

A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear;
No light, no fire: the unfriendly elements
Forgot thee utterly; nor have I time
To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight
Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,
Lying with simple shells!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Sonnet

ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson that in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties served in one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—
Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity:
Of labour, that in still advance outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.
Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting:
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil;
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

III

NYMPHOLEPTOS

And as they passed up the slope, still discoursing on life and death, they heard the soft laughter of young men and maidens among the trees, as it always has been, as it always will be, through the brief days of Man's life on earth.

Passi quei colli e vieni allegramente,
Non ti curar di tanta compagnia,
Vieni, pensando a me segretamente,
Ch'io t'accompagna per tutta la via.

'O mistress mine'

O MISTRESS mine! where are you roaming?
O! stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

The Way of It

THE wind is awake, pretty leaves, pretty leaves,
Heed not what he says; he deceives, he deceives:
Over and over
To the lowly clover
He has lisped the same love (and forgotten it, too)
He will soon be lisping and pledging to you.

The boy is abroad, pretty maid, pretty maid,
Beware his soft words; I'm afraid, I'm afraid:
He has said them before
Times many a score,
Ay, he died for a dozen ere his beard pricked through,
And the very same death he will die for you.

The way of the boy is the way of the wind,
As light as the leaves is dainty maid kind;
One to deceive,
And one to believe—
That is the way of it, year to year;
But I know you will learn it too late, my dear.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

'Kind are her answers'

KIND are her answers,
But her performance keeps no day;
Breaks time, as dancers
From their own music when they stray:
All her free favours
And smooth words wing my hopes in vain.
O, did ever voice so sweet but only feign?
Can true love yield such delay,
Converting joy to pain?

Lost is our freedom
When we submit to women so:
Why do we need them,
When, in their best, they work our woe?
There is no wisdom
Can alter ends by fate prefixed.
O, why is the good of man with evil mixed?
Never were days yet called two,
But one night went betwixt.

THOMAS CAMPION.

'There is none, O none but you'

THERE is none, O none but you,
That from me estrange your sight,
Whom mine eyes affect to view,
Or chainèd ears hear with delight.

Other beauties others move,
In you I all graces find;
Such is the effect of Love,
To make them happy that are kind

Women in frail beauty trust,
Only seem you fair to me;
Yet prove truly kind and just,
For that may not dissembled be.

Sweet, afford me then your sight,
That, surveying all your looks,
Endless volumes I may write
And fill the world with envied books.

Which, when after ages view,
All shall wonder and despair,
Woman, to find man so true,
Or man, a woman half so fair!

THOMAS CAMPION

Vobiscum est Iope

WHEN thou must home to shades of underground,
And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,
To hear the stories of thy finished love
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,
And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:
When thou hast told these honours done to thee,
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me!

THOMAS CAMPION.

'*Wrong not, sweet empress of my heart*'

WRONG not, sweet empress of my heart,
The merit of true passion,
With thinking that he feels no smart,
That sues for no compassion.

Silence in love bewrays more woe
Than words, though ne'er so witty:
A beggar that is dumb, you know,
May challenge double pity.

Then wrong not, dearest to my heart,
My true, though secret passion;
He smarteth most that hides his smart,
And sues for no compassion.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

'Because I breathe not love to every one'

BECAUSE I breathe not love to every one,
Nor do not use set colours for to wear,
Nor nourish special locks of vowèd hair,
Nor give each speech a full point of a groan,—
The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the moan
Of them which in their lips Love's standard bear,
What, he! (say they of me) Now I dare swear
He cannot love: no, no, let him alone!
And think so still, so Stella know my mind!
Profess indeed I do not Cupid's art;
But you, fair maids, at length this true shall find,
That his right badge is but worn in the heart.
Dumb swans, not chattering pies, do lovers prove;
They love indeed who quake to say they love.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

To Anthea, who may command him Any Thing

BID me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be:
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free,
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay,
To honour thy decree:
Or bid it languish quite away,
And't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep,
While I have eyes to see:
And having none, yet will I keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair,
Under that cypress tree:
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death, to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me:
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee.

ROBERT HERRICK.

On a Girdle

THAT which her slender waist confined
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my Heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer:
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love
Did all within this circle move.

A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair:
Give me but what this ribbon bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round!

EDMUND WALLER

'My love she's but a lassie yet'

MY love she's but a lassie yet,
A lightsome lovely lassie yet;
It scarce wad do
To sit an' woo
Down by the stream sae glassy yet.

But there's a braw time coming yet,
When we may gang a-roaming yet;
An' hint wi' glee
O' joys to be,
When fa's the modest gloaming yet.

She's neither proud nor saucy yet,
She's neither plump nor gaucy yet;
But just a jinking,
Bonny blinking,
Hilty-skilty lassie yet.

But O, her artless smile's mair sweet
Than hinny or than marmalete;
An' right or wrang,
Ere it be lang,
I'll bring her to a parley yet.

I'm jealous o' what blesses her,
The very breeze that kisses her,
The flowery beds
On which she treads,
Though wae for ane that misses her.

Then O, to meet my lassie yet,
Up in yon glen sae grassy yet;
For all I see
Are naught to me,
Save her that's but a lassie yet.

JAMES HOGG.

'When first I saw her'

WHEN first I saw her, at the stroke
The heart of nature in me spoke;
The very landscape smiled more sweet,
Lit by her eyes, pressed by her feet;
She made the stars of heaven more bright
By sleeping under them at night;
And fairer made the flowers of May
By being lovelier than they.

O, soft, soft, where the sunshine spread,
Dark in the grass I laid my head;
And let the lights of earth depart
To find her image in my heart;
Then through my being came and went
Tones of some heavenly instrument,
As if where its blind motions roll
This world should wake and be a soul.

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY.

Song

SHE is not fair to outward view
As many maidens be,
Her loveliness I never knew
Until she smiled on me;
Oh! then I saw her eye was bright,
A well of love, a spring of light.

But now her looks are coy and cold,
To mine they ne'er reply,
And yet I cease not to behold
The love-light in her eye:
Her very frowns are fairer far
Than smiles of other maidens are.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

Song

NAY but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
And this last fairest tress of all,
So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

Because, you spend your lives in praising;
To praise, you search the wide world over:
So, why not witness, calmly gazing,
If earth holds aught—speak truth—above her?
Above this tress, and this I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Ad domnulam suam

LITTLE lady of my heart!
Just a little longer,
Love me: we will pass and part,
Ere this love grow stronger.

I have loved thee, Child! too well,
To do aught but leave thee:
Nay! my lips should never tell
Any tale, to grieve thee.

Little lady of my heart!
Just a little longer,
I may love thee: we will part,
Ere my love grow stronger.

Soon thou leavest fairy-land;
Darker grow thy tresses:
Soon no more of hand in hand;
Soon no more caresses!

Little lady of my heart!
Just a little longer,
Be a child; then, we will part,
Ere this love grow stronger.

ERNEST DOWSON.

Song

A LAKE and a fairy boat
To sail in the moonlight clear,—
And merrily we would float
From the dragons that watch us here!

Thy gown should be snow-white silk,
And strings of orient pearls,
Like gossamers dipped in milk,
Should twine with thy raven curls!

Red rubies should deck thy hands,
And diamonds should be thy dower—
But fairies have broke their wands,
And wishing has lost its power!

THOMAS HOOD.

IV

AMANTIUM IRAE

The souls of women are so small
That some believe they have none at all;
Or, if they have, like cripples, still
They've but one faculty, the will;
The other two are quite laid by
To make up one great tyranny:
And though their passion have most power
They are, like Turks, but slaves the more
To th' absolute will, that with a breath,
Has sovran power of life and death,
And, as its little interests move,
Could turn 'em all to hate or love,
For nothing in a moment turn
To frantic love, disdain, and scorn;
And make that love degenerate
To as great extremity of hate;
And hate again and scorn and piques
To flames and raptures and love tricks.

How stubbornly this fellow answered me!
There is a vile dishonest trick in man,
More than in women: all the men I mee
Appear thus to me, are harsh and rude,
And have a subtilty in everything,
Which love could never know; but we fond women
Harbour the easiest and smoothest thoughts
And think all shall go so; it is unjust
That men and women should be matched together.

'Never love unless you can'

NEVER love unless you can
Bear with all the faults of man:
Men sometimes will jealous be
Though but little cause they see;
And hang the head, as discontent,
And speak what straight they will repent.

Men that but one saint adore,
Make a show of love to more:
Beauty must be scorned in none,
Though but truly served in one:
For what is courtship, but disguise?
True hearts may have dissembling eyes.

Men when their affairs require,
Must awhile themselves retire:
Sometimes hunt, and sometimes hawk,
And not ever sit and talk.
If these, and such like you can bear,
Then like, and love, and never fear.

THOMAS CAMPION.

'*Let me not to the marriage of true minds*'

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

'*Ah, be not false*'

AH, be not false, sweet Splendour!
Be true, be good;
Be wise as thou art tender;
Be all that Beauty should.

Not lightly be thy citadel subdued;
Not ignobly, not untimely.
Take praise in solemn mood;
Take love sublimely.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

The Hill

BREATHLESS, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, 'Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old . . .' 'And when we die
All 's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips,' said I,
—'Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!'

'We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!' we said;
'We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness!' . . . Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
—And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

RUPERT BROOKE.

'Justine, you love me not'

'Helas! vous ne m'aimez pas.'—PIRON

I KNOW, Justine, you speak me fair
As often as we meet;
And 'tis a luxury, I swear,
To hear a voice so sweet;
And yet it does not please me quite,
The civil way you've got;
For me you're something too polite—
Justine, you love me not!

I know, Justine, you never scold
  At aught that I may do:
If I am passionate or cold,
  'Tis all the same to you.
'A charming temper,' say the men,
  'To smooth a husband's lot':
I wish 'twere ruffled now and then—
  Justine, you love me not!

I know, Justine, you wear a smile
  As beaming as the sun;
But who supposes all the while
  It shines for only one?
Though azure skies are fair to see,
  A transient cloudy spot
In yours would promise more to me—
  Justine, you love me not!

I know, Justine, you make my name
  Your eulogistic theme,
And say—if any chance to blame—
  You hold me in esteem.
Such words, for all their kindly scope,
  Delight me not a jot;
Just as you would have praised the Pope—
  Justine, you love me not!

know, Justine,—for I have heard
  What friendly voices tell—
You do not blush to say the word,
  'You like me passing well';

'JUSTINE, YOU LOVE ME NOT'

And thus the fatal sound I hear
That seals my lonely lot:
There 's nothing now to hope or fear—
Justine, you love me not!

JOHN GODFREY SAXE.

'Never give all the heart'

NEVER give all the heart, for love
Will hardly seem worth thinking of
To passionate women if it seem
Certain, and they never dream
That it fades out from kiss to kiss;
For everything that's lovely is
But a brief, dreamy, kind delight.
Oh! never give the heart outright
For they, for all smooth lips can say,
Have given their hearts up to the play,
And who can play it well enough
If deaf and dumb and blind with love?
He that made this knows all the cost,
For he gave all his heart and lost.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

Song

OH! say not woman's heart is bought
With vain and empty treasure.
Oh! say not woman's heart is caught
By every idle pleasure.
When first her gentle bosom knows
Love's flame, it wanders never;
Deep in her heart the passion glows,
She loves, and loves for ever.

AMANTIUM IRAE

Oh! say not woman's false as fair,
That like the bee she ranges!
Still seeking flowers more sweet and rare,
As fickle fancy changes.
Ah! no, the love that first can warm
Will leave her bosom never;
No second passion e'er can charm,
She loves, and loves for ever.

ISAAC POCOCK.

Strangers Yet

STRANGERS yet!
After years of life together,
After fair and stormy weather,
After travel in far lands,
After touch of wedded hands,—
Why thus joined? Why ever met,
If they must be strangers yet?

Strangers yet!
After childhood's winning ways,
After care and blame and praise,
Counsel asked and wisdom given,
After mutual prayers to Heaven,
Child and parent scarce regret
When they part—are strangers yet.

Strangers yet!
After strife for common ends—
After title of 'old friends,'

STRANGERS YET

After passions fierce and tender,
After cheerful self-surrender,
Hearts may beat and eyes be met,
And the souls be strangers yet.

Strangers yet!
Oh! the bitter thought to scan
All the loneliness of man:
Nature, by magnetic laws,
Circle unto circle draws,
But they only touch when met,
Never mingle—strangers yet.

Strangers yet!
Will it evermore be thus—
Spirits still impervious?
Shall we never fairly stand
Soul to soul as hand to hand?
Are the bounds eternal set
To retain us—strangers yet?

Strangers yet!
Tell not Love it must aspire
Unto something other—higher:
God himself were loved the best
Were our sympathies at rest,
Rest above the strain and fret
Of the world of—strangers yet!
Strangers yet!

R. Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton.

From 'The Heart of Midlothian'

CAULD is my bed, Lord Archibald,
And sad my sleep of sorrow:
But thine sall be as sad and cauld,
My fause true-love! to-morrow.

And weep ye not, my maidens free,
Though death your mistress borrow:
For he for whom I die to-day,
Shall die for me to-morrow.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Youth and Art

IT once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted and polished,
Then laughed 'They will see some day
Smith made, and Gibson demolished.'

My business was song, song, song;
I chirped, cheeped, trilled, and twittered,
'Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,
And Grisi's existence embittered!'

I earned no more by a warble
Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I—soon managed to find
Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault
If you never turned your eyes' tail up,
As I shook upon E *in alt*,
Or ran the chromatic scale up:

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
With bulrush and watercresses.

Why did not you pinch a flower
In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

I did look, sharp as a lynx,
(And yet the memory rankles)
When models arrived, some minx
Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles.

But I think I gave you as good!
'That foreign fellow,—who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
For his tuning her that piano?'

Could you say so, and never say,
'Suppose we join hands and fortunes,
And I fetch her from over the way,
Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes'?

No, no: you would not be rash,
Nor I rasher and something over:
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,
I've married a rich old lord,
And you're dubbed knight and an R. A.

Each life's unfulfilled, you see;
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
Starved, feasted, despaired,—been happy.

And nobody calls you a dunce,
And people suppose me clever:
This could but have happened once,
And we missed it, lost it for ever.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Destiny

WHY each is striving, from of old,
To love more deeply than he can?
Still would be true, yet still grows cold?
—Ask of the Powers that sport with man!

They yoked in him, for endless strife,
A heart of ice, a soul of fire;
And hurled him on the Field of Life,
An aimless unallayed Desire.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

'Come not, when I am dead'

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry:
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest;
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:
Go by, go by.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Song from 'Death's Jest-Book'

IF thou wilt ease thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then sleep, dear, sleep;
And not a sorrow
Hang any tear on your eyelashes;
Lie still and deep,
Sad soul, until the sea-wave washes
The rim o' the sun to-morrow,
In eastern sky.

But wilt thou cure thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then die, dear, die;
'Tis deeper, sweeter,
Than on a rose-bank to lie dreaming
With folded eye;
And there alone, amid the beaming
Of love's stars, thou'lt meet her
In eastern sky.

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES.

A Little While

A LITTLE while a little love
The hour yet bears for thee and me
Who have not drawn the veil to see
If still our heaven be lit above.
Thou merely, at the day's last sigh,
Hast felt thy soul prolong the tone;
And I have heard the night-wind cry
And deemed its speech mine own.

A little while a little love
The scattering autumn hoards for us
Whose bower is not yet ruinous
Nor quite unleaved our songless grove.
Only across the shaken boughs
We hear the flood-tides seek the sea,
And deep in both our hearts they rouse
One wail for thee and me.

A little while a little love
May yet be ours who have not said
The word it makes our eyes afraid
To know that each is thinking of.
Not yet the end: be our lips dumb
In smiles a little season yet:
I'll tell thee, when the end is come,
How we may best forget.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

An Old Song ended

'HOW should I your true love know
From another one?'
'By his cockle-hat and staff
And his sandal-shoon.'

'And what signs have told you now
That he hastens home?'
'Lo! the spring is nearly gone,
He is nearly come.'

'For a token is there nought,
Say, that he should bring?'
'He will bear a ring I gave
And another ring.'

'How may I, when he shall ask,
Tell him who lies there?'
'Nay, but leave my face unveiled
And unbound my hair!'

'Can you say to me some word
I shall say to him?'
'Say I'm looking in his eyes
Though my eyes are dim.'

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

'In the days of old'

IN the days of old,
Lovers felt true passion,
Deeming years of sorrow
By a smile repaid.
Now the charms of gold,
Spells of pride and fashion,
Bid them say good morrow
To the best-loved maid.

Through the forests wild,
O'er the mountains lonely,
They were never weary
Honour to pursue:
If the damsel smiled
Once in seven years only,
All their wanderings dreary
Ample guerdon knew.

Now one day's caprice
Weighs down years of smiling,
Youthful hearts are rovers,
Love is bought and sold:
Fortune's gifts may cease,
Love is less beguiling;
Wiser were the lovers
In the days of old.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

A Woman's Last Word

LET'S contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep:
All be as before, Love,
—Only sleep!

What so wild as words are?
I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
Hawk on bough!

See the creature stalking
While we speak!
Hush and hide the talking,
Cheek on cheek.

What so false as truth is,
False to thee?
Where the serpent's tooth is,
Shun the tree—

Where the apple reddens
Never pry—
Lest we lose our Edens,
Eve and I!

Be a god and hold me
With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
With thine arm!

Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought—

Meet, if thou require it,
Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
In thy hands.

That shall be to-morrow,
Not to-night;
I must bury sorrow
Out of sight:

—Must a little weep, Love,
(Foolish me!)
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Song

COME, let us now resolve at last
To live and love in quiet;
We'll tie the knot so very fast
That time shall ne'er untie it.
The truest joys they never prove,
Who free from quarrels live;
'Tis the most tender part of love
Each other to forgive.

When least I seemed concerned I took
No pleasure, nor had rest;
And when I feigned an angry look,
Alas! I loved you best.
Own but the same to me, you'll find
How blest will be our fate;
O to be happy, to be kind,
Sure never is too late.

JOHN SHEFFIELD.

V

HIMEROS

And they dreamed, that if Providence had so willed, their lives might have been filled with Love alone ; something as bright, as radiant, as sublime, as the twinkling of the stars !

Love is too great a happiness
For wretched mortals to possess :
For, could it hold inviolate
Against those cruelties of fate,
Which all felicities below
By rigid laws are subject to,
It would become a bliss too high
For perishing mortality,
Translate to Earth the joys above,
For nothing goes to Heaven but Love.

'Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night'

CARE-CHARMER Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent-darkness born,
Relieve my languish and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care return.
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

SAMUEL DANIEL.

Sleep, Silence' child

SLEEP, Silence' child, sweet father of soft rest,
Prince, whose approach peace to all mortals brings
Indifferent host to shepherds and to kings,
Sole comforter of minds with grief oppressed;
Lo, by thy charming rod all breathing things
Lie slumbering, with forgetfulness possessed,
And yet o'er me to spread thy drowsy wings
Thou sparest, alas! who cannot be thy guest.
Since I am thine, O come, but with that face
To inward light which thou art wont to show;
With feignèd solace ease a true-felt woe;
Or if, deaf god, thou do deny that grace,
Come as thou wilt, and what thou wilt bequeath,
I long to kiss the image of my death.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

Sonnet

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain.
Before high-pilèd books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain ;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love ;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

JOHN KEATS.

Lovesight

WHEN do I see thee most, beloved one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

LOVESIGHT

O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
  Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
  The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

A Serenade at the Villa

THAT was I, you heard last night
  When there rose no moon at all,
Nor, to pierce the strained and tight
  Tent of heaven, a planet small:
Life was dead, and so was light.

Not a twinkle from the fly,
  Not a glimmer from the worm;
When the crickets stopped their cry,
  When the owls forbore a term,
You heard music; that was I.

Earth turned in her sleep with pain,
  Sultrily suspired for proof:
In at heaven and out again,
  Lightning!—where it broke the roof,
Bloodlike, some few drops of rain.

What they could my words expressed,
  O my love, my all, my one!
Singing helped the verses best,
  And when singing's best was done,
To my lute I left the rest.

So wore night; the East was gray,
White the broad-faced hemlock-flowers
There would be another day;
Ere its first of heavy hours
Found me, I had passed away.

What became of all the hopes,
Words and song and lute as well?
Say, this struck you—'When life gropes
Feebly for the path where fell
Light last on the evening slopes,

'One friend in that path shall be,
To secure my steps from wrong;
One to count night day for me,
Patient through the watches long,
Serving most with none to see.'

Never say—as something bodes—
'So, the worst has yet a worse!
When life halts 'neath double loads,
Better the task-master's curse
Than such music on the roads!

'When no moon succeeds the sun,
Nor can pierce the midnight's tent
Any star, the smallest one,
While some drops, where lightning went,
Show the final storm begun—

'When the fire-fly hides its spot,
When the garden-voices fail
In the darkness thick and hot,—
Shall another voice avail,
That shape be where these are not?

'Has some plague a longer lease,
Proffering its help uncouth?
Can't one even die in peace?
As one shuts one's eyes on youth,
Is that face the last one sees?'

Oh, how dark your villa was,
Windows fast and obdurate!
How the garden grudged me grass
Where I stood—the iron gate
Ground its teeth to let me pass!

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Visionary

SILENT is the house: all are laid asleep:
One alone looks out o'er the snow-wreaths deep,
Watching every cloud, dreading every breeze
That whirls the wildering drift, and bends the groaning trees.

Cheerful is the hearth, soft the matted floor;
Not one shivering gust creeps through pane or door;
The little lamp burns straight, its rays shoot strong and far:
I trim it well, to be the wanderer's guiding-star.

Frown, my haughty sire! chide, my angry dame;
Set your slaves to spy; threaten me with shame;
But neither sire nor dame, nor prying serf shall know,
What angel nightly tracks that waste of frozen snow.

What I love shall come like visitant of air,
Safe in secret power from lurking human snare;
What loves me, no word of mine shall e'er betray;
Though for faith unstained my life must forfeit pay.

Burn, then, little lamp; glimmer straight and clear—
Hush! a rustling wing stirs, methinks, the air:
He for whom I wait, thus ever comes to me;
Strange Power! I trust thy might; trust thou my constancy!

EMILY BRONTË.

From 'The Prisoner'

'STILL let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear
Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair;
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

'He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs,
With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars.
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

'Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
When joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears,
When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunderstorm.

'But, first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends;
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience ends;
Mute music soothes my breast—unuttered harmony,
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

'Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals;
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels:
Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found,
Measuring the gulf, it stoops and dares the final bound.

'Oh! dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again;
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

'Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald death, the vision is divine!'

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go—
We had no further power to work the captive woe:
Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given
A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

EMILY BRONTË.

The Buried Life

LIGHT flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears my eyes are wet.
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile;
But there's a something in this breast
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
And let me read there, love, thy inmost soul.

Alas, is even Love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel?
I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;
I knew they lived and moved
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast.

But we, my love—does a like spell benumb
Our hearts—our voices?—must we too be dumb?

Ah, well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained:
For that which seals them hath been deep ordained.

Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be,
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own identity;
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey,
Even in his own despite, his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded River of our Life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be

Eddying about in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life,
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart that beats
So wild, so deep in us, to know
Whence our thoughts come and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas, none ever mines;
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown on each talent and power,
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves;
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on for ever unexpressed.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true:
And then we will no more be racked
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power;
Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call;
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,

Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.

Only—but this is rare—
When a belovèd hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed,—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again:
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, Rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast,
And then he thinks he knows
The Hills where his life rose,
And the Sea where it goes.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

One Way of Love

ALL June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves
And strew them where Pauline may pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string; fold music's wing:
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion.—Heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'Tis well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they!

ROBERT BROWNING.

To Marguerite

YES: in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone.*
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour;

Oh then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent.
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh might our marges meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire?—
A God, a God their severance ruled;
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Life in a Love

ESCAPE me?
Never—
Beloved!
While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,
Me the loving and you the loth,
While the one eludes, must the other pursue.
My life is a fault at last, I fear:
It seems too much like a fate, indeed!
Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.

But what if I fail of my purpose here?
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And baffled, get up and begin again,—
So the chase takes up one's life, that 's all.
While, look but once from your farthest bound
At me so deep in the dust and dark,
No sooner the old hope drops to ground
Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,
I shape me—
Ever
Removed!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Lucy

I

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.'

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

II

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

III

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Rose Aylmer

AH, what avails the sceptred race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

'O that 'twere Possible'

OTHAT 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixed with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than any thing on earth.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee;

'O THAT 'TWERE POSSIBLE'

Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies:
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold!

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

Through the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame;
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Through all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

'O THAT 'TWERE POSSIBLE

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering through the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say, 'forgive the wrong',
Or to ask her, 'take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Song

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember
And haply may forget.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

Passion and Memory

OLD legends tell how woman's hair
Can make the spirits of the air
Stoop down from brighter realms above
And feel the thrall of mortal love.
So human passion draws its force
From many a strange, unlooked-for source;
And chords to all but one unknown
Will sometimes yield the sweetest tone.

The charm that prints the deepest trace
Lies often in a homely face;
And half our strongest passions find
Their key-note in an answering mind;
A hand can haunt, a voice can thrill,
A smile, a glance remembered still
Across the waste of vanished years,
Can fill the aged eye with tears,
While forms of purest Grecian mould
Leave fancy dull, and passion cold.
And, stranger still, 'tis sometimes seen
How pleasure neither pure nor keen—
Some doubtful, broken, troubled joy,
All mixed with fear or pain's alloy—
Some fierce excitement's shuddering thrill,
Some passion strife of good or ill,
Will gain a charm in memory's dreams,
And grow and brighten till it gleams
A lonely star, whose light can last
Amid a long-forgotten past.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTFOLE LECKY.

The Return

A LITTLE hand is knocking at my heart,
And I have closed the door.
'I pray thee, for the love of God, depart:
Thou shalt come in no more.'

'Open, for I am weary of the way.
The night is very black.
I have been wandering many a night and day.
Open. I have come back.'

The little hand is knocking patiently;
I listen, dumb with pain.
'Wilt thou not open any more to me?
I have come back again.'

'I will not open any more. Depart.
I, that once lived, am dead.'
The hand that had been knocking at my heart
Was still. 'And I?' she said.

There is no sound, save, in the winter air,
The sound of wind and rain.
All that I loved in all the world stands there.
And will not knock again.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

'When you are old'

WHEN you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

VI

MENS SANA

Well and wisely said the Greek,
Be thou faithful, but not fond;
To the altar's foot thy fellow seek,
The Furies wait beyond.

For the most part, they have much better fortune in love whose hopes are built upon something in their person, than those who trust to their expression and service, and they that care less than they that care more; which not perceiving, many men cast away their services, as one arrow after another till, in the end, together with their hopes, they lose their wits.

From 'The Bride of Lammermoor'

LOOK not thou on beauty's charming,
Sit thou still when kings are arming,
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,
Speak not when the people listens,
Stop thine ear against the singer,
From the red gold keep thy finger;
Vacant heart, and hand, and eye,
Easy live and quiet die.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Eros

THEY put their finger on their lip,
The Powers above;
The seas their islands clip,
The moons in ocean dip,
They love, but name not love.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The Happiest Heart

WHO drives the horses of the sun
Shall lord it but a day;
Better the lowly deed were done,
And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
The dust will hide the crown;
Ay, none shall nail so high his name
Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to Heaven the rest.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

Destiny

THAT you are fair or wise is vain,
Or strong, or rich, or generous;
You must have also the untaught strain
That sheds beauty on the rose.
There 's a melody born of melody,
Which melts the world into a sea.
Toil could never compass it;
Art its height could never hit;
It came never out of wit;
But a music music-born
Well may Jove and Juno scorn.
Thy beauty, if it lack the fire
Which drives me mad with sweet desire,
What boots it? What the soldier's mail,
Unless he conquer and prevail?
What all the goods thy pride which lift,
If thou pine for another's gift?
Alas! that one is born in blight,
Victim of perpetual slight:
When thou lookest on his face,
Thy heart saith, 'Brother, go thy ways!
None shall ask thee what thou doest,
Or care a rush for what thou knowest,

Or listen when thou repliest,
Or remember where thou liest,
Or how thy supper is sodden;'
And another is born
To make the sun forgotten.
Surely he carries a talisman
Under his tongue;
Broad his shoulders are and strong;
And his eye is scornful,
Threatening, and young.
I hold it of little matter
Whether your jewel be of pure water,
A rose diamond or a white,
But whether it dazzle me with light.
I care not how you are dressed,
In coarsest weeds or in the best;
Nor whether your name is base or brave;
Nor for the fashion of your behaviour:
But whether you charm me,
Bid my bread feed and my fire warm me,
And dress up Nature in your favour.
One thing is forever good;
That one thing is Success,—
Dear to the Eumenides,
And to all the heavenly brood.
Who bides at home, nor looks abroad,
Carries the eagles, and masters the sword.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

'My dear and only love, I pray'

MY dear and only love, I pray
That noble world of thee
Be governed by no other sway
But purest monarchy;
For if confusion have a part
(Which virtuous souls abhor),
And hold a synod in thy heart,
I'll never love thee more.

Like Alexander I will reign,
And I will reign alone;
My thoughts did evermore disdain
A rival on my throne:
He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch
To win or lose it all.

But I must rule and govern still,
And always give the law,
And have each subject at my will
And all to stand in awe.
But 'gainst my battery if I find
Thou shunn'st the prize so sore
As that thou sett'st me up a blind,
I'll never love thee more.

Or in the empire of thy heart,
Where I should solely be,
Another do pretend a part
And dares to vie with me,

Or if committees thou erect,
And go on such a score,
I'll sing and laugh at thy neglect,
And never love thee more.

But if thou wilt be constant, then,
And faithful of thy word,
I'll make thee glorious by my pen,
And famous by my sword;
I'll serve thee in such noble ways
Were never heard before:
I'll crown and deck thee all with bays,
And love thee evermore.

JAMES GRAHAM, MARQUESS OF MONTROSE.

'I will make you brooches'[1]

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

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To Rhea

THEE, dear friend, a brother soothes,
Not with flatteries, but truths,
Which tarnish not, but purify
To light which dims the morning's eye.
I have come from the spring-woods,
From the fragrant solitudes ; —
Listen what the poplar-tree
And murmuring waters counselled me.

If with love thy heart has burned ;
If thy love is unreturned ;
Hide thy grief within thy breast,
Though it tear thee unexpressed ;
For when love has once departed
From the eyes of the false-hearted,
And one by one has torn off quite
The bandages of purple light ;
Though thou wert the loveliest
Form the soul had ever dressed,
Thou shalt seem, in each reply,
A vixen to his altered eye ;
Thy softest pleadings seem too bold,
Thy praying lute will seem to scold ;
Though thou kept the straightest road,
Yet thou errest far and broad.

But thou shalt do as do the gods
In their cloudless periods ;
For of this lore be thou sure,—
Though thou forget, the gods, secure,

Forget never their command,
But make the statute of this land.
As they lead, so follow all,
Ever have done, ever shall.
Warning to the blind and deaf,
'Tis written on the iron leaf,
Who drinks of Cupid's nectar cup
Loveth downward, and not up ;
Therefore, who loves, of gods or men,
Shall not by the same be loved again
His sweetheart's idolatry
Falls, in turn, a new degree.
When a god is once beguiled
By beauty of a mortal child,
And by her radiant youth delighted,
He is not fooled, but warily knoweth
His love shall never be requited.
And thus the wise Immortal doeth.—
'Tis his study and delight
To bless that creature day and night;
From all evils to defend her ;
In her lap to pour all splendour ;
To ransack earth for riches rare,
And fetch her stars to deck her hair ;
He mixes music with her thoughts,
And saddens her with heavenly doubts ;
All grace, all good his great heart knows
Profuse in love, the king bestows :
Saying, 'Hearken ! Earth, Sea, Air !
This monument of my despair
Build I to the All-good, All-fair.
Not for a private good,
But I, from my beatitude,

Albeit scorned as none was scorned,
Adorn her as was none adorned.
I make this maiden an ensample
To Nature, through her kingdoms ample,
Whereby to model newer races,
Statelier forms, and fairer faces;
To carry man to new degrees
Of power, and of comeliness,
These presents be the hostages
Which I pawn for my release.
See to thyself, O Universe!
Thou art better, and not worse!'—
And the god, having given all,
Is freed forever from his thrall.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The Touch-stone

A FOOL and knave with different views
For Julia's hand apply;
The knave to mend his fortune sues,
The fool to please his eye.

Ask you how Julia will behave,
Depend on't for a rule,—
If she's a fool she'll wed the knave,
If she's a knave, the fool.

SAMUEL BISHOP.

Indifference

I MUST not say that thou wert true,
Yet let me say that thou wert fair.
And they that lovely face who view,
They will not ask if truth be there.

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts
Wounded by men, by Fortune tried,
Outwearied with their lonely parts,
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear;
Their lot was but to weep and moan.
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,
For neither could subsist alone!

But souls whom some benignant breath
Has charmed at birth from gloom and care,
These ask no love—these plight no faith,
For they are happy as they are.

The world to them may homage make,
And garlands for their forehead weave.
And what the world can give, they take:
But they bring more than they receive.

They smile upon the world; their ears
To one demand alone are coy.
They will not give us love and tears—
They bring us light, and warmth, and joy.

It was not love that heaved thy breast,
Fair child! it was the bliss within.
Adieu! and say that one, at least,
Was just to what he did not win.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Love and Friendship

LOVE is like the wild rose-briar ;
Friendship like the holly-tree.
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms.
But which will bloom most constantly ?

The wild rose-briar is sweet in spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air ;
Yet wait till winter comes again,
And who will call the wild-briar fair ?

Then, scorn the silly rose-wreath now,
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That, when December blights thy brow,
He still may leave thy garland green.

EMILY BRONTË.

Respectability

DEAR, had the world in its caprice
Deigned to proclaim 'I know you both,
Have recognized your plighted troth,
Am sponsor for you : live in peace ! '
How many precious months and years
Of youth had passed, that speed so fast,
Before we found it out at last,
The world, and what it fears ?

RESPECTABILITY

How much of priceless life were spent
With men that every virtue decks,
And women models of their sex,
Society's true ornament,—
Ere we dared wander, nights like this,
Through wind and rain, and watch the Seine,
And feel the Boulevart break again
To warmth and light and bliss?

I know! the world proscribes not love;
Allows my finger to caress
Your lip's contour and downiness,
Provided it supply a glove.
The world's good word!—the Institute!
Guizot receives Montalembert!
Eh? Down the court three lampions flare—
Put forward your best foot!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Sorrows of Werther

WERTHER had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her?
She was cutting bread-and-butter.

Charlotte was a married lady,
And a moral man was Werther,
And, for all the wealth of Indies,
Would do nothing for to hurt her.

So he sighed and pined and ogled,
And his passion boiled and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread-and-butter.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

First Love Remembered

PEACE in her chamber, wheresoe'er
It be, a holy place:
The thought still brings my soul such grace
As morning meadows wear.

Whether it still be small and light,
A maid's who dreams alone,
As from her orchard-gate the moon
Its ceiling showed at night:

Or whether, in a shadow dense
As nuptial hymns invoke,
Innocent maidenhood awoke
To married innocence:

There still the thanks unheard await
The unconscious gift bequeathed;
For there my soul this hour has breathed
An air inviolate.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

'Through the long days and years'

THROUGH the long days and years
What will my loved one be,
Parted from me?
Through the long days and years.

Always as then she was,
Loveliest, brightest, best,
Blessing and blest,—
Always as then she was.

Never on earth again
Shall I before her stand,
Touch lip or hand,—
Never on earth again.

But while my darling lives,
Peaceful I journey on,
Not quite alone,
Not while my darling lives.

JOHN HAY.

VII

IN PRAISE OF WOMEN

Sei tanta graziosa e tanta bella,
Che chi ti mira e non ti don' il cuore
O non è vivo o non conosce amore.

I saw the Sibyl at Cumae,
(One said) with mine own eye.
She hung in a cage and read her rune
To all the passers by.
Said the boys, 'What wouldst thou Sibyl?'
She answered, 'I would die!'

The melodious character of the earth,
The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go, and does not wish to go,
The justified mother of men.

A Budget of Paradoxes

CHILD in thy beauty: empress in thy pride!
Sweet and unyielding as the summer's tide;
Starlike to tremble, starlike to abide.

Guiltless of wounding, yet more true than steel;
Gem-like thy light to flash and to conceal;
Tortoise to bear; insect to see and feel.

Blushing and shy, yet dread we thy disdain;
Smiling, a sunbeam fraught with hints of rain;
Trilling love-notes to freedom's fierce refrain.

The days are fresh, the hours are wild and sweet,
When spring and winter, dawn and darkness meet;
Nymph, with one welcome, thee and these we greet.

JOHN MARTLEY.

On a Certain Lady at Court

I KNOW the thing that 's most uncommon
(Envy, be silent and attend);
I know a reasonable woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a friend.

Not warped by passion, awed by rumour;
Not grave through pride, nor gay through folly;
An equal mixture of good humour
And sensible soft melancholy.

'Has she no faults then,' Envy says, 'Sir?'
Yes, she has one, I must aver;
When all the world conspires to praise her,
The woman 's deaf, and does not hear!

ALEXANDER POPE.

O Mally's meek, Mally's sweet

AS I was walking up the street,
A barefit maid I chanced to meet;
But O the road was very hard
For that fair maiden's tender feet.

It were mair meet that those fine feet
Were weel laced up in silken shoon,
And 'twere more fit that she should sit
Within yon chariot gilt aboon.

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
Comes trinkling down her swan-like neck,
And her two eyes, like stars in skies,
Would keep a sinking ship frae wreck.

O Mally's meek, Mally's sweet,
Mally's modest and discreet,
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
Mally's every way complete.

ROBERT BURNS.

The Solitary Reaper

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Stepping Westward

'*WHAT, you are stepping westward?*'—'*Yea*'
—'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Hester

WHEN maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flushed her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call:—if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was trained in Nature's school,
Nature had blessed her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet fore-warning?

CHARLES LAMB.

Lucy

LUCY is a golden girl;
But a man,—a *man* should woo her!
They who seek her shrink aback,
When they should, like storms, pursue her

All her smiles are hid in light;
All her hair is lost in splendour;
But she hath the eyes of Night,
And a heart that 's over-tender.

Yet,—the foolish suitors fly
(Is't excess of dread or duty?)
From the starlight of her eye,
Leaving to neglect her beauty!

Men by fifty seasons taught
Leave her to a young beginner,
Who, without a second thought,
Whispers, wooes, and straight must win her.

Lucy is a golden girl!
Toast her in a goblet brimming!
May the man that wins her wear
On his *heart* the Rose of Women!

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER.

One Girl

(*A combination from Sappho*)

LIKE the sweet apple which reddens upon the topmost bough,
A-top on the topmost twig,—which the pluckers forgot, somehow,—
Forgot it not, nay, but got it not, for none could get it till now.

Like the wild hyacinth flower which on the hills is found,
Which the passing feet of the shepherds for ever tear and wound,
Until the purple blossom is trodden into the ground.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

To Helen

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

On his Deceased Wife

METHOUGHT I saw my late espousèd saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force though pale and faint.
Mine as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint,
Purification in the old Law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veil'd; yet to my fancied sight;
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But O as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

JOHN MILTON.

Mary Booth

WHAT shall we do now, Mary being dead,
Or say or write that shall express the half?
What can we do but pillow that fair head,
And let the Spring-time write her epitaph?—

As it will soon, in snowdrop, violet,
Wind-flower, and columbine, and maiden's tear;
Each letter of that pretty alphabet,
That spells in flowers the pageant of the year.

She was a maiden for a man to love;
She was a woman for a husband's life;
One that has learned to value, far above
The name of love, the sacred name of wife.

Her little life-dream, rounded so with sleep,
Had all there is of life, except gray hairs,—
Hope, love, trust, passion and devotion deep;
And that mysterious tie a Mother bears.

She hath fulfilled her promise and hath passed:
Set her down gently at the iron door!
Eyes look on that loved image for the last:
Now cover it in earth,—her earth no more.

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS.

A Woman's Portrait

SHE was fair, but not so fair
That others were not lovelier there;
Hers was not the fleeting power
Of a brief impassioned hour,
But the charm that grows more dear
With each slow revolving year.
In her eye of cloudless blue,
In her smile so sweet and true,
You might read a spirit made
For the sunshine and the shade;

Keen alike in work and pleasure,
Yet with self-control and measure;
Brave and buoyant, wise and gay,
On the smooth or rugged way;
'Tis the type that wears the best,
Made for sympathy and rest.

Pinings for unreal things,
Morbid doubts and questionings,
All the weakness and the pain
Of the fever-stricken brain,
Turning from the things we see
To the things that cannot be,
Vanished in the healthy hue
Which around my path she threw,
And the sting of settled care
Passed away when she was there;
For my life grew strong and brave
With the courage that she gave,
And the night at last has flown;
Hers the praise, and hers alone.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

To . . .

'TWAS not alone thy beauty's power
That made thee dear to me;
The quiet of the sunset hour
Most truly mirrored thee.

'Twas thine to shed a soothing balm
On doubt and grief and strife,
And make a bright and holy calm
The atmosphere of life.

TO . .

Thy touch of sympathy could find
To frozen hearts the key,
The darkened and the arid mind
Gave light and fruit for thee.

Ah! many a flower unnoticed springs
On life's most trodden ways,
And common lives and common things
Grew nobler in thy praise.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

'*She was a phantom of delight*'

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

To a Highland Girl

(*At Inversneyde, upon Loch Lomond*)

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; that household lawn:
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy abode—
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But, O fair creature! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,

I bless thee, vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart,
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence,
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?

O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell:
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father—anything to thee!

Now thanks to heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her:
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And thee, the spirit of them all!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The Solitary-Hearted

SHE was a queen of noble Nature's crowning,
A smile of hers was like an act of grace;
She had no winsome looks, no pretty frowning,
Like daily beauties of the vulgar race:
But if she smiled, a light was on her face,
A clear, cool kindliness, a lunar beam
Of peaceful radiance, silvering o'er the stream
Of human thought with unabiding glory;
Not quite a waking truth, not quite a dream,
A visitation, bright and transitory.

But she is changed, —hath felt the touch of sorrow,
No love hath she, no understanding friend;
O grief! when heaven is forced of earth to borrow
What the poor niggard earth has not to lend;
But when the stalk is snapped, the rose must bend.
The tallest flower that skyward rears its head
Grows from the common ground, and there must shed
Its delicate petals. Cruel fate, too surely,
That they should find so base a bridal bed,
Who lived in virgin pride, so sweet and purely.

She had a brother, and a tender father,
And she was loved, but not as others are
From whom we ask return of love,— but rather
As one might love a dream; a phantom fair
Of something exquisitely strange and rare,
Which all were glad to look on, men and maids,

Yet no one claimed—as oft, in dewy glades,
The peering primrose, like a sudden gladness,
Gleams on the soul, yet unregarded fades;
The joy is ours, but all its own the sadness.

'Tis vain to say—her worst of grief is only
The common lot, which all the world have known;
To her 'tis more, because her heart is lonely,
And yet she hath no strength to stand alone,—
Once she had playmates, fancies of her own,
And she did love them. They are passed away
As fairies vanish at the break of day;
And like a sceptre of an age departed,
Or unsphered angel wofully astray,
She glides along—the solitary-hearted.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

Of Those who Walk Alone

WOMEN there are on earth, most sweet and high,
Who lose their own, and walk bereft and lonely,
Loving that one lost heart until they die,
Loving it only.

And so they never see beside them grow
Children, whose coming is like breath of flowers;
Consoled by subtler loves the angels know
Through childless hours.

Good deeds they do: they comfort and they bless
In duties others put off till the morrow;
Their look is balm, their touch is tenderness
To all in sorrow.

OF THOSE WHO WALK ALONE

Betimes the world smiles at them, as 'twere shame,
This maiden guise, long after youth's departed;
But in God's Book they bear another name—
'The faithful-hearted.'

Faithful in life, and faithful unto death,
Such souls, in sooth, illume with lustre splendid
That glimpsed, glad land wherein, the Vision saith,
Earth's wrongs are ended.

RICHARD BURTON.

VIII

APOLLO

Derrière les ennuis et les vastes chagrins
Qui chargent de leurs poids l'existence brumeuse
Heureux celui qui peut d'une aile vigoureuse
S'élancer vers les champs lumineux et sereins!

Celui dont les pensers, comme des alouettes,
Vers les cieux le matin prennent un libre essor,
—Qui plane sur la vie et comprend sans effort
Le langage des fleurs et des choses muettes.

When the sword glitters o'er the judge's head,
And fear has coward churchmen silenced,
Then is the poet's time; 'tis then he draws
And single fights forsaken virtue's cause:
Sings still of ancient rights and better times,
Seeks suffering good, arraigns successful crimes.

If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet, in thy place, and be content!
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the Earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees.

Hymn of Apollo

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—
Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of Night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers,
With their aethereal colours; the moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
For grief that I depart they weep and frown:
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle?

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine is mine,
All light of art or nature;—to my song
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The Visit of the Gods

(*Imitated from Schiller*)

NEVER, believe me,
Appear the Immortals,
Never alone:
Scarce had I welcomed the Sorrow-beguiler,
Iacchus! but in came Boy Cupid the Smiler;
Lo! Phoebus the Glorious descends from his throne!
They advance, they float in, the Olympians all!
With Divinities fills my
Terrestrial hall!

How shall I yield you
Due entertainment,
Celestial quire?
Me rather, bright guests! with your wings of upbuoyance
Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,

That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre!
Hah! we mount! on their pinions they waft up my soul
O give me the nectar!
O fill me the bowl!

Give him the nectar!
Pour out for the poet,
Hebe! pour free!
Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
That Styx the detested no more he may view,
And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be!
Thanks, Hebe! I quaff it! Io Paean, I cry!
The wine of the Immortals
Forbids me to die!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

Revival

SO I went wrong,
Grievously wrong, but folly crushed itself,
And vanity o'ertoppling fell, and time
And healthy discipline and some neglect,
Labour and solitary hours revived
Somewhat, at least, of that original frame.
Oh, well do I remember then the days
When on some grassy slope (what time the sun
Was sinking, and the solemn eve came down
With its blue vapour upon field and wood
And elm-embosomed spire) once more again
I fed on sweet emotion, and my heart
With love o'erflowed, or hushed itself in fear

Unearthly, yea celestial. Once again
My heart was hot within me, and meseemed,
I too had in my body breath to wind
The magic horn of song; I too possessed
Up-welling in my being's depths a fount
Of the true poet-nectar whence to fill
The golden urns of verse.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

Apollo

VAINLY, O burning Poets!
Ye wait for his inspiration,
Even as kings of old
Stood by the oracle-gates.
Hasten back, he will say, *hasten back*
To your provinces far away!
There, at my own good time,
Will I send my answer to you.
Are ye not kings of song?
At last the god cometh!
The air runs over with splendour:
The fire leaps high on the altar;
Melodious thunders shake the ground.
Hark to the Delphic responses!
Hark! it is the god!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

A Musical Instrument

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan
(How tall it stood in the river!),
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

'This is the way,' laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sat by the river),
'The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.'
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

On a Portrait of Dante by Giotto

CAN this be thou who, lean and pale,
With such immitigable eye
Didst look upon those writhing souls in bale,
And note each vengeance, and pass by
Unmoved, save when thy heart by chance
Cast backward one forbidden glance,
And saw Francesca, with child's glee,
Subdue and mount thy wild-horse knee
And with proud hands control its fiery prance?

ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO

With half-drooped lids, and smooth, round brow,
And eye remote, that inly sees
Fair Beatrice's spirit wandering now
In some sea-lulled Hesperides,
Thou movest through the jarring street,
Secluded from the noise of feet
By her gift-blossom in thy hand,
Thy branch of palm from Holy Land;—
No trace is here of ruin's fiery sleet.

Yet there is something round thy lips
That prophesies the coming doom,
The soft, gray herald-shadow ere the eclipse
Notches the perfect disk with gloom;
A something that would banish thee,
And thine untamed pursuer be,
From men and their unworthy fates,
Though Florence had not shut her gates,
And Grief had loosed her clutch and let thee free.

Ah! he who follows fearlessly
The beckonings of a poet-heart
Shall wander, and without the world's decree,
A banished man in field and mart;
Harder than Florence' walls the bar
Which with deaf sternness holds him far
From home and friends, till death's release,
And makes his only prayer for peace,
Like thine, scarred veteran of a lifelong war!

James Russell Lowell.

An Epitaph on the admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones,
The labour of an age in pilèd stones,
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst to th'shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

JOHN MILTON.

Shakespeare

OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality:

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst walk on Earth unguess'd at. Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Marlowe

NEXT Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That the first poets had; his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear;
For that fine madness still he did retain
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

London, 1802

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Alcaics

O MIGHTY-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrëan
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

September 1819

DEPARTING Summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays!
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough:—
Fall, rosy garlands, from my head!
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow!

Yet will I temperately rejoice:
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undiscordant themes;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than vernal ecstasies,
And passion's feverish dreams.

For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muses smile;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To enervate and defile.

Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent plains
In Britain's earliest dawn:
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn!

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Alcaeus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong;
Woe! woe to Tyrants! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By wingèd Love inscribed, to assuage
The pangs of vain pursuit;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion swayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold?
Can haughty Time be just?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

On Sunium's Height

WEARERS of rings and chains,
Pray do not take the pains
To set me right.
In vain my faults ye quote:
I write as others wrote
On Sunium's height.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Memorabilia

AH, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems, and new!

But you were living before that,
And you are living after,
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather—
Well, I forget the rest.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels! What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

JOHN KEATS.

Ode on a Lycian Tomb

WHAT a gracious nunnery of grief is here!
One woman garbed in sorrow's every mood;
Each sad presentment celled apart, in fear
Lest that herself upon herself intrude
And break some tender dream of sorrow's day,
Here cloistered lonely, set in marble gray.

Oh, pale procession of immortal love
Forever married to immortal grief!
All life's high-passioned sorrow far above,
Past help of time's compassionate relief:
These changeless stones are treasuries of regret
And mock the term by time for sorrow set.

Ah me! What tired hearts have hither come
To weep with thee, and give thy grief a voice;
And such as have not added to life's sum
The count of loss, they who do still rejoice
In love which time yet leaveth unassailed,
Here tremble, by prophetic sadness paled.

Thou who hast wept for many, weep for me,
For surely I, who deepest grief have known,
Share thy stilled sadness, which must ever be
Too changeless, and unending like my own,
Since thine is woe that knows not time's release,
And sorrow that can never compass peace.

He too who wrought this antique poetry,
Which wakes sad rhythms in the human heart,
Must oft with thee have wondered silently,
Touched by the strange revealments of his art,
When at his side you watched the chisel's grace
Foretell what time would carve upon thy face.

If to thy yearning silence, which in vain
Suggests its speechless plea in marbles old,
We add the anguish of an equal pain,
Shall not the sorrow of these statues cold
Inherit memories of our tears, and keep
Record of grief long time in death asleep?

Ah me! In death asleep; how pitiful,
If in that timeless time the soul should wake
To wander heart-blind where no years may dull
Remembrance, with a heart forbid to break.
—Dove of my home, that fled life's stranded ark,
The sea of death is shelterless and dark.—

Cold mourner set in stone so long ago,
Too much my thoughts have dwelt with thee apart;
Again my grief is young; full well I know
The pang re-born, that mocked my feeble art
With that too human wail in pain expressed,
The parent cry above the empty nest!

Come back, I cried. 'I may not come again.
Not islandless is this uncharted sea;
Here is no death, nor any creature's pain,
Nor any terror of what is to be,
'Tis but to trust one pilot; soon are seen
The sunlit peaks of thought and peace serene.'

II

Fair worshipper of many gods, whom I
In one God worship, very surely He
Will for thy tears and mine have some reply,
When death assumes the trust of life, and we
Hear once again the voices of our dead,
And on a newer earth contented tread.

Doubtless for thee thy Lycian fields were sweet,
Thy dream of heaven no wiser than my own;
Nature and love, the sound of children's feet,
Home, husband, friends; what better hast thou known?
What of the gods could ask thy longing prayer
Except again this earth and love to share?

For all in vain with vexed imaginings,
We build of dreams another earth than ours,
And high in thought's thinned atmosphere, with wings
That helpless beat, and mock our futile powers,
Falter and flutter, seeing naught above,
And naught below except the earth we love.

Enough it were to find our own old earth
With death's dark riddle answered, and unspoiled
By fear, or sin, or pain; where joy and mirth
Have no sad shadows, and love is not foiled,
And where, companioned by the mighty dead,
The dateless books of time and fate are read.

III

What stately melancholy doth possess
This innocent marble with eternal doom!
What most imperious grief doth here oppress
The one sad soul which haunts this peopled tomb
In many forms that all these years have worn
One thought, for time's long comment more forlorn!

Lo grief, through love instinct with silentness,
Reluctant, in these marbles eloquent,
The ancient tale of loss doth here confess,
The first confusing, mad bewilderment,
Life's unbelief in death, in love fore-spent,
Thought without issue, child-like discontent.

Time, that for thee awhile did moveless seem,
Again his glass hath turned; I see thee stand
Thought-netted, or, like one who in a dream
Self-wildered, in some alien forest land
Lone-wandering, in endless mazes lost,
Wearily stumbles over tracks re-crossed.

ODE ON A LYCIAN TOMB

Oft didst thou come in after days to leave
Roses and laurel on thy warrior's grave,
And with thy marble self again to grieve,
Glad of what genius unto sorrow gave,
Interpreting what had been and would be,
Love, tears, despair, attained serenity.

There are whom sorrow leaves full-wrecked. The great
Grow in the urgent anguish of defeat,
And with mysterious confidence await
The silent coming of the bearer's feet;
Wherefore this quiet face so proudly set
To front life's duties, but naught to forget.

For life is but a tender instrument
Whereon the master hand of grief doth fall.
Leaving love's vibrant tissue resonant
With echoes, ever waking at the call
Of every kindred tone; so grief doth change
The instrument o'er which his fateful fingers range.

SILAS WEIR MITCHELL.

IX

IN WAR-TIME

'Tis a generous mind
That led his disposition to the war;
For gentle love and noble courage are
So near allied, that one begets another;
Or love is sister, and courage is brother.
Could I affect him better than before,
His soldier's heart would make me love him more.

I thrust base cowards into honour's chair,
While the true-spirited soldier stands by
Bare-headed and all bare, whilst all his scars
They scoff, that ne'er durst view the face of wars.

Fall, stream, from Heaven to bless; return as well;
So did our sons; Heaven met them as they fell.

To Lucasta, on going to the Wars

TELL me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

RICHARD LOVELACE.

When the Assault was intended to the City

CAPTAIN or Colonel, or Knight in arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If ever deed of honour did thee please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee, for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.

Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower,
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground: and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

JOHN MILTON.

Ode,

Written in the beginning of the year 1746.

HOW sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

WILLIAM COLLINS.

Lament for Culloden

[*April* 16, 1746.]

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, Alas!
And aye the saut tear blins her ee:
Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's ee!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee.

ROBERT BURNS.

'Sound, sound the clarion'

SOUND, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

THOMAS OSBERT MORDAUNT.

Major Bellenden's Song

AND what though winter will pinch severe
Through locks of grey and a cloak that's old,
Yet keep up thy heart, bold cavalier,
For a cup of sack shall fence the cold.

For time will rust the brightest blade,
And years will break the strongest bow;
Was never wight so starkly made,
But time and years would overthrow!

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

'A weary lot is thine'

'A WEARY lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
No more of me you knew,
My love!
No more of me you knew.

'This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow
Ere we two meet again.'
He turn'd his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, 'Adieu for evermore,
My love!
And adieu for evermore.'

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Monterey

WE were not many—we who stood
Before the iron sleet that day—
Yet many a gallant spirit would
Give half his years if he then could
Have been with us at Monterey.

Now here, now there, the shot it hailed
In deadly drifts of fiery spray,
Yet not a single soldier quailed
When wounded comrades round them wailed
Their dying shout at Monterey.

And on—still on our column kept
Through walls of flame its withering way;
Where fell the dead, the living stepped,
Still charging on the guns which swept
The slippery streets of Monterey.

The foe himself recoiled aghast,
When, striking where he strongest lay,
We swooped his flanking batteries past,
And braving full their murderous blast,
Stormed home the towers of Monterey.

Our banners on those turrets wave,
And there our evening bugles play;
Where orange-boughs above their grave
Keep green the memory of the brave
Who fought and fell at Monterey.

We are not many—we who pressed
  Beside the brave who fell that day;
But who of us has not confessed
He'd rather share their warrior rest
  Than not have been at Monterey?

CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN.

The Song of the Camp

'GIVE us a song!' the soldiers cried,
  The outer trenches guarding,
When the heated guns of the camps allied
  Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
  Lay grim and threatening under;
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff
  No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said:
  'We storm the forts to-morrow;
Sing while we may, another day
  Will bring enough of sorrow.'

They lay along the battery's side,
  Below the smoking cannon:
Brave hearts from Severn and from Clyde,
  And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame;
  Forgot was Britain's glory:
Each heart recalled a different name,
  But all sang 'Annie Laurie.'

Voice after voice caught up the song,
Until its tender passion
Rose like an anthem, rich and strong,—
Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,
But as the song grew louder,
Something upon the soldier's cheek
Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned
The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learned
How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
Rained on the Russian quarters,
With scream of shot, and burst of shell,
And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim
For a singer dumb and gory;
And English Mary mourns for him
Who sang of 'Annie Laurie'.

Sleep, soldiers! still in honoured rest
Your truth and valour wearing:
The bravest are the tenderest,—
The loving are the daring.

BAYARD TAYLOR.

WAR PICTURES (1861–5)

I

An Army Corps on the March

WITH its cloud of skirmishers in advance,
With now the sound of a single shot, snapping like a whip, and now an irregular volley,
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades press on,
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd men,
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the ground,
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the horses sweat,
As the army corps advances.

II

Cavalry Crossing a Ford

A LINE in long array, where they wind betwixt green islands;
They take a serpentine course—their arms flash in the sun—hark to the musical clank;
Behold the silvery river—in it the splashing horses, loitering, stop to drink;
Behold the brown-faced men—each group, each person, a picture—the negligent rest on the saddles;
Some emerge on the opposite bank—others are just entering the ford—while,
Scarlet, and blue, and snowy white,
The guidon flags flutter gaily in the wind.

III

Bivouac on a Mountain Side

I SEE before me now, a travelling army halting;
Below, a fertile valley spread, with barns, and the orchards of summer;
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt in places, rising high;
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall shapes, dingily seen;
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some away up on the mountain;
The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-sized, flickering;
And over all, the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach, studded, breaking out, the eternal stars.

IV

'A march in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown'

A MARCH in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown;
A route through a heavy wood, with muffled steps in the darkness;
Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant retreating;
Till after midnight glimmer upon us the lights of a dim-lighted building;
We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by the dim-lighted building;

'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads,—'tis now an impromptu hospital;
—Entering but for a minute, I see a sight beyond all the pictures and poems ever made:
Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving candles and lamps,
And by one great pitchy torch, stationary, with wild red flame, and clouds of smoke;
By these, crowds, groups of forms, vaguely I see, on the floor, some in the pews laid down;
At my feet more distinctly, a soldier, a mere lad, in danger of bleeding to death, (he is shot in the abdomen;)
I stanch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face is white as a lily;)
Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene, fain to absorb it all,
Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in obscurity, some of them dead,
Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell of ether, the odour of blood;
The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms of soldiers—the yard outside also fill'd;
Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers, some in the death-spasm sweating;
An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders or calls;
The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the glint of the torches;
These I resume as I chant—I see again the forms, I smell the odour;
Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men, fall in*;
But first I bend to the dying lad—his eyes open—a half-smile gives he me;

Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to the darkness,
Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in the ranks,
The unknown road still marching.

V

'I saw old General at bay'

I saw old General at bay;
(Old as he was, his grey eyes yet shone out in battle like stars;)
His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his works;
He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines—a desperate emergency;
I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks—but two or three were selected;
I saw them receive their orders aside—they listen'd with care—the adjutant was very grave;
I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their lives.

VI

'O tan-faced prairie-boy'

O TAN-FACED prairie-boy!
Before you came to camp, came many a welcome gift;
Praises and presents came, and nourishing food till at last, among the recruits,
You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but look'd on each other,
When lo! more than all the gifts of the world you gave me.

VII

'With music strong I come'

WITH music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for conquer'd and slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

I beat and pound for the dead,
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes!
And the numberless unknown heroes, equal to the greatest heroes known!

VIII

Reconciliation

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky!
Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost;
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;

. . . For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is dead;
I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin—
I draw near;
I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

IX

'Lo! Victress on the peaks'

LO! Victress on the peaks!
Where thou, with mighty brow, regarding the world,
(The world, O Libertad, that vainly conspired against thee;)
Out of its countless, beleaguering toils, after thwarting them all;
Dominant, with the dazzling sun around thee,
Flauntest now unharm'd, in immortal soundness and bloom—lo! in these hours supreme,
No poem proud, I, chanting bring to thee—nor mastery's rapturous verse;
But a book containing night's darkness, and blood-dripping wounds,
And psalms of the dead.

X

The Artilleryman's Vision

WHILE my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars are over long,
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the vacant midnight passes,

And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear, just hear, the breath of my infant,
There in the room as I wake from sleep this vision presses upon me;
The engagement opens there and then, in fantasy unreal,
The skirmishers begin, they crawl cautiously ahead, I hear the irregular snap! snap!
I hear the sounds of the different missiles, the short *t-h-t!* *t-h-t!* of the rifle-balls;
I see the shells exploding leaving small white clouds, I hear the great shells shrieking as they pass,
The grape like the hum and whirr of wind through the trees, (quick, tumultuous now the contest rages,)
All the scenes at the batteries themselves rise in detail before me again,
The crashing and smoking, the pride of the men in their pieces,
The chief-gunner ranges and sights his piece and selects a fuse of the right time,
After firing I see him lean aside and look eagerly off to note the effect;
Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging, (the young colonel leads himself this time with brandish'd sword,)
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly fill'd up, no delay,)
I breathe the suffocating smoke, then the flat clouds hover low concealing all;
Now a strange lull comes for a few seconds, not a shot fired on either side,
Then resumed the chaos louder than ever, with eager calls and orders of officers,
While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts to my ears a shout of applause, (some special success,)

And ever the sound of the cannon far or near, (rousing
even in dreams a devilish exultation and all the old
mad joy in the depths of my soul,)
And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions,
batteries, cavalry, moving hither and thither,
(The falling, dying, I heed not, the wounded dripping and
red I heed not, some to the rear are hobbling,)
Grime, heat, rush,—aide-de-camps galloping by or on a full
run,
With the patter of small arms, the warning *s-s-t* of the
rifles, (these in my vision I hear or see,)
And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-colour'd
rockets.

XI

'Delicate cluster'

DELICATE cluster! flag of teeming life!
Covering all my lands! all my seashores lining!
Flag of death! (how I watch'd you through the smoke of
battle pressing!
How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth defiant!)
Flag, cerulean! sunny flag, with the orbs of night dappled!
Ah my silvery beauty! ah my woolly white and crimson!
Ah to sing the song of you, my matron mighty!
My sacred one, my mother.

WALT WHITMAN.

Killed at the Ford

HE is dead, the beautiful youth,
The heart of honour, the tongue of truth,
He, the life and light of us all,
Whose voice was blithe as a bugle-call,
Whom all eyes followed with one consent,
The cheer of whose laugh, and whose pleasant word,
Hushed all murmurs of discontent.

Only last night, as we rode along,
Down the dark of the mountain gap,
To visit the picket-guard at the ford,
Little dreaming of any mishap,
He was humming the words of some old song:
'Two red roses he had on his cap,
And another he bore at the point of his sword.'

Sudden and swift a whistling ball
Came out of a wood, and the voice was still;
Something I heard in the darkness fall,
And for a moment my blood grew chill;
I spake in a whisper, as he who speaks
In a room where some one is lying dead;
But he made no answer to what I said.

We lifted him up to his saddle again,
And through the mire and the mist and the rain
Carried him back to the silent camp,
And laid him as if asleep on his bed;
And I saw by the light of the surgeon's lamp
Two white roses upon his cheeks,
And one, just over his heart, blood-red!

And I saw in a vision how far and fleet
That fatal bullet went speeding forth,
Till it reached a town in the distant North,
Till it reached a house in a sunny street,
Till it reached a heart that ceased to beat
Without a murmur, without a cry;
And a bell was tolled, in that far-off town,
For one who had passed from cross to crown,
And the neighbours wondered that she should die.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

The Sower

I SAW a Sower walking slow
Across the earth, from east to west;
His hair was white as mountain snow,
His head drooped forward on his breast.

With shrivelled hands he flung his seed,
Nor ever turned to look behind;
Of sight or sound he took no heed;
It seemed he was both deaf and blind.

His dim face showed no soul beneath,
Yet in my heart I felt a stir,
As if I looked upon the sheath
That once had clasped Excalibur.

I heard, as still the seed he cast,
How, crooning to himself, he sung,
'I sow again the holy Past,
The happy days when I was young.

'Then all was wheat without a tare,
Then all was righteous, fair, and true;
And I am he whose thoughtful care
Shall plant the Old World in the New.

'The fruitful germs I scatter free,
With busy hand, while all men sleep;
In Europe now, from sea to sea,
The nations bless me as they reap.'

Then I looked back along his path,
And heard the clash of steel on steel,
Where man faced man, in deadly wrath,
While clanged the tocsin's hurrying peal.

The sky with burning towns flared red,
Nearer the noise of fighting rolled,
And brothers' blood, by brothers shed,
Crept, curdling, over pavements cold.

Then marked I how each germ of truth
Which through the dotard's fingers ran
Was mated with a dragon's tooth
Whence there sprang up an armèd man.

I shouted, but he could not hear;
Made signs, but these he could not see;
And still, without a doubt or fear,
Broadcast he scattered anarchy.

Long to my straining ears the blast
Brought faintly back the words he sung:
'I sow again the holy Past,
The happy days when I was young.'

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

The Spires of Oxford

I SAW the spires of Oxford
As I was passing by,
The grey spires of Oxford
Against a pearl-grey sky;
My heart was with the Oxford men
Who went abroad to die.

The years go fast in Oxford,
The golden years and gay;
The hoary colleges look down
On careless boys at play,
But when the bugles sounded—War!
They put their games away.

They left the peaceful river,
The cricket field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford,
To seek a bloody sod.
They gave their merry youth away
For country and for God.

God rest you, happy gentlemen,
Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun
Instead of cap and gown.
God bring you to a fairer place
Than even Oxford town.

WINIFRED M. LETTS.

O Glorious France

YOU have become a forge of snow-white fire,
A crucible of molten steel, O France!
Your sons are stars who cluster to a dawn
And fade in light for you, O glorious France!
They pass through meteor changes with a song
Which to all islands and all continents
Says life is neither comfort, wealth, nor fame,
Nor quiet hearthstones, friendship, wife nor child
Nor love, nor youth's delight, nor manhood's power
Nor many days spent in a chosen work,
Nor honoured merit, nor the patterned theme
Of daily labour, nor the crowns nor wreaths
Or seventy years.

These are not all of life,
O France, whose sons amid the rolling thunder
Of cannon stand in trenches where the dead
Clog the ensanguined ice. But life to these
Prophetic and enraptured souls is vision,
And the keen ecstasy of fated strife,
And divination of the loss as gain,
And reading mysteries with brightened eyes
In fiery shock and dazzling pain before
The orient splendour of the face of Death,
As a great light beside a shadowy sea;
And in a high will's strenuous exercise,
Where the warmed spirit finds its fullest strength
And is no more afraid. And in the stroke
Of azure lightning when the hidden essence
And shifting meaning of man's spiritual worth

And mystical significance in time
Are instantly distilled to one clear drop
Which mirrors earth and heaven.

This is life
Flaming to heaven in a minute's span
When the breath of battle blows the smouldering spark
And across these seas
We who cry Peace and treasure life and cling
To cities, happiness, or daily toil
For daily bread, or trail the long routine
Of seventy years, taste not the terrible wine
Whereof you drink, who drain and toss the cup
Empty and ringing by the finished feast;
Or have it shaken from your hand by sight
Of God against the olive woods.

As Joan of Arc amid the apple trees
With sacred joy first heard the voices, then
Obeying plunged at Orleans in a field
Of spears and lived her dream and died in fire,
Thou, France, hast heard the voices and hast lived
The dream and known the meaning of the dream,
And read its riddle: How the soul of man
May to one greatest purpose make itself
A lens of clearness, how it loves the cup
Of deepest truth, and how its bitterest gall
Turns sweet to soul's surrender.

And you say:
Take days for repetition, stretch your hands
For mocked renewal of familiar things;
The beaten path, the chair beside the window,

The crowded street, the task, the accustomed sleep.
And waking to the task, or many springs
Of lifted cloud, blue water, flowering fields—
The prison house grows close no less, the feast
A place of memory sick for senses dulled
Down to the dusty end where pitiful Time
Grown weary cries Enough!

EDGAR LEE MASTERS.

Non-resistance

PERHAPS too far in these considerate days
Has patience carried her submissive ways;
Wisdom has taught us to be calm and meek,
To take one blow, and turn the other cheek;
It is not written what a man shall do,
If the rude caitiff smite the other too!

Land of our fathers, in thine hour of need
God help thee, guarded by the passive creed!
As the lone pilgrim trusts to beads and cowl,
When through the forest rings the gray wolf's howl;
As the deep galleon trusts her gilded prow
When the black corsair slants athwart her bow;
As the poor pheasant, with his peaceful mien,
Trusts to his feathers, shining golden-green,
When the dark plumage with the crimson beak
Has rustled shadowy from its splintered peak;
So trust thy friends, whose babbling tongues would charm
The lifted sabre from thy foeman's arm,
Thy torches ready for the answering peal
From bellowing fort and thunder-freighted keel!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Nell Gwyn

SWEET heart, that no taint of the throne or the stage
Could touch with unclean transformation, or alter
To the likeness of courtiers whose consciences falter
At the smile or the frown, at the mirth or the rage,
Of a master whom chance could inflame or assuage,
Our Lady of Laughter, invoked in no psalter,
Adored of no faithful that cringe and that palter,
Praise be with thee yet from a hag-ridden age.

Our Lady of Pity thou wast: and to thee
All England, whose sons are the sons of the sea,
Gives thanks, and will hear not if history snarls
When the name of the friend of her sailors is spoken;
And thy lover she cannot but love—by the token
That thy name was the last on the lips of King Charles.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

The Dead

BLOW out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

RUPERT BROOKE.

The Dying Reservist

I SHALL not see the faces of my friends,
Nor hear the songs the rested reapers sing
After the labours of the harvesting,
In those dark nights before the summer ends;

Nor see the floods of spring, the melting snow,
Nor in the autumn twilight hear the stir
Of reedy marshes, when the wild ducks whir
And circle black against the afterglow.

My mother died; she shall not have to weep;
My wife will find another home; my child,
Too young, will never grieve or know; but I
Have found my brother, and contentedly
I'll lay my head upon his knees and sleep.
O brother Death,—I knew you when you smiled.

MAURICE BARING.

'The sun rises bright in France'

THE sun rises bright in France,
And fair sets he;
But he has tint the blithe blink he had
In my ain countrie.

O, it 's nae my ain ruin
That saddens aye my e'e,
But the dear Marie I left ahin'
Wi' sweet bairnies three.

My lanely hearth burned bonnie,
An' smiled my ain Marie;
I've left a' my heart behin'
In my ain countrie.

The bud comes back to summer,
And the blossom to the bee;
But I'll win back, O never,
To my ain countrie.

O, I am leal to high Heaven,
Where soon I hope to be,
An' there I'll meet ye a' soon
Frae my ain countrie!

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

The Silent Voice

BENEATH the willows on the green
With hands entwined and nimble feet,
They danced to music swift and sweet,
When Love came by unseen.

He fanned them with his airy wings,
He touched them with his finger-tip,
But fled ere he had taught the lip
To utter what the dumb heart sings.

She knew not when her hand she gave,
Within whose breast her young hopes lay;
He knew not it was grief, one day,
Found him a soldier's grave.

LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA.

WAR PICTURES 1914–18.

I

At Carnoy

DOWN in the hollow there 's the whole Brigade
Camped in four groups: through twilight falling slow
I hear a sound of mouth-organs, ill-played,
And murmur of voices, gruff, confused, and low.
Crouched among thistle-tufts I've watched the glow
Of a blurred orange sunset flare and fade;
And I'm content. To-morrow we must go
To take some cursèd Wood . . . O world God made!

II

A Whispered Tale

I'D heard fool-heroes brag of where they'd been,
With stories of the glories that they'd seen,
Till there was nothing left for shame to screen.

But you, good, simple soldier, seasoned well
In woods and posts and crater-lines of hell,
Who dodge remembered 'crumps' with wry grimace,—
Cold hours of torment in your queer, kind face,
Smashed bodies in your strained, unhappy eyes,
And both your brothers killed to make you wise;
You had no empty babble; what you said
Was like a whisper from the maimed and dead.
But Memory brought the voice I knew, whose note
Was smothered when they shot you in the throat;
And still you whisper of the war, and find
Sour jokes for all those horrors left behind.

III

'Blighters'

THE House is crammed: tier beyond tier they grin
And cackle at the Show, while prancing ranks
Of harlots shrill the chorus, drunk with din;
'We're sure the Kaiser loves the dear old Tanks!'

I'd like to see a Tank come down the stalls,
Lurching to rag-time tunes, or 'Home, sweet Home,'—
And there'd be no more jokes in Music-halls
To mock the riddled corpses round Bapaume.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

Hail and Farewell

DOGS barking, dust awhirling,
And drum throbs in the street.
The braggart pipes are skirling
An old tune wild and sweet.

By fours the lads come trooping
With heads erect and high,
I watch with heart adrooping
To see the kilties by.

And one of them is glancing
Up to this window, this!
His brave blue eyes are dancing;
He tosses me a kiss.

I send him back another,
I fling my hand out free.
'God keep you safely, brother,
Who go to die for me.'

ANNE HIGGINSON SPICER.

Overseas

WHILE Flanders' fields grow greener
O'er faithful lads and true,
To sit and knit at endless grey
Seems a poor thing to do.

Now France has had my lover
Since April was a year,
While I roll strips of linen
And choke back many a tear.

To march with drum and banner,
To dig, to shoot, to kill—
'Twould seem to me a Heaven
To this Hell of sitting still.

ANNE HIGGINSON SPICER.

I cannot stand and wait

HOW can I serve who am too old to fight?
I cannot stand and wait
With folded hands, and lay me down at night
In restless expectation that the day
Will bring some stroke of Fate
I cannot help to stay.

I CANNOT STAND AND WAIT

Once, like the spider in his patterned web,
Based on immutable law,
Boldly I spun the strands of arduous thought,
Now seeming naught,
Rent in the sudden hurricane of war.

Within my corner I will take my place,
And grant me grace
Some delicate thing to perfect and complete
With passionate contentment, as of old
Before my heart grew cold.
This in the Temple I will dedicate,
A widow's mite,
Among more precious gifts, obscured from sight
By the majestic panoply of state.
But when triumphal candles have burned low
And valorous trophies crumbled into dust,
Perchance my gift may glow,
Still radiating sacrificial joy
Amid the ravages of moth and rust.

HENRY HEAD.

How's my Boy?

'HO, Sailor of the sea!
How 's my boy—my boy?'
'What 's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sailed he?'

'My boy John—
He that went to sea—
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy 's my boy to me.

'You come back from sea,
And not know my John?
I might as well have asked some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There 's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

'How 's my boy—my boy?
And unless you let me know
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass buttons or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the "Jolly Briton"'—
'Speak low, woman, speak low!'

'And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?'
'That good ship went down.'

'How 's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor,
I was never aboard her.
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how 's my John?'
'Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her.'

HOW 'S MY BOY

'How 's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother—
How 's my boy—my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How 's my boy—my boy?'

SYDNEY DOBELL.

Chorus from 'Prometheus Unbound'

THIS is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;

This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The Country of the Camisards

WE travelled in the print of olden wars,
Yet all the land was green,
And love we found, and peace,
Where fire and war had been.

They pass and smile, the children of the sword—
No more the sword they wield;
And O, how deep the corn
Along the battlefield!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

X

RECUSANTS AND STANDARD-BEARERS

Increase of days increases misery;
And misery brings selfishness which sears
The heart's first feelings: 'mid the battle's roar,
In Death's dread grasp, the soldier's eyes are blind
To comrades dying, and he whose hopes are o'er
Turns coldest from the sufferings of mankind.

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, 'Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
Blunt thing—!' he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

To Wordsworth

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return;
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude:
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The Lost Leader

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!

We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more triumph for devils and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Stanzas to . . .

WELL, some may hate, and some may scorn,
And some may quite forget thy name;
But my sad heart must ever mourn
Thy ruined hopes, thy blighted fame!
'Twas thus I thought, an hour ago,
Even weeping o'er that wretch's woe;
One word turned back my gushing tears,
And lit my altered eye with sneers.
Then, 'Bless the friendly dust', I said,
'That hides thy unlamented head!
Vain as thou wert, and weak as vain,
The slave of Falsehood, Pride, and Pain—
My heart has nought akin to thine;
Thy soul is powerless over mine.'
But these were thoughts that vanished too;
Unwise, unholy, and untrue:
Do I despise the timid deer,
Because his limbs are fleet with fear?
Or would I mock the wolf's death-howl,
Because his form is gaunt and foul?
Or hear with joy the leveret's cry,
Because it cannot bravely die?
No! Then above his memory
Let Pity's heart as tender be;
Say 'Earth, lie lightly on that breast,
And, kind Heaven, grant that spirit rest!'

EMILY BRONTË.

'Let us be merry before we go'

IF sadly thinking, with spirits sinking,
Could more than drinking my cares compose,
A cure for sorrow from sighs I'd borrow,
And hope to-morrow would end my woes.
But as in wailing there's nought availing,
And Death unfailing will strike the blow,
Then for that reason, and for a season,
Let us be merry before we go.

To joy a stranger, a way-worn ranger,
In every danger my course I've run;
Now hope all ending, and death befriending,
His last aid lending, my cares are done.
No more a rover, or hapless lover,
My griefs are over—my glass runs low;
Then for that reason, and for a season,
Let us be merry before we go.

JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN.

Self-Interrogation

'THE evening passes fast away,
'Tis almost time to rest;
What thoughts has left the vanished day,
What feelings in thy breast?'

'The vanished day? It leaves a sense
Of labour hardly done;
Of little gained with vast expense—
A sense of grief alone!

'Time stands before the door of Death,
Upbraiding bitterly;
And Conscience, with exhaustless breath,
Pours black reproach on me:

'And though I've said that Conscience lies
And Time should Fate condemn;
Still, sad Repentance clouds my eyes,
And makes me yield to them!'

'Then art thou glad to seek repose?
Art glad to leave the sea,
And anchor all thy weary woes
In calm Eternity?

'Nothing regrets to see thee go—
Not one voice sobs "Farewell";
And where thy heart has suffered so,
Canst thou desire to dwell?'

'Alas! the countless links are strong
That bind us to our clay;
The loving spirit lingers long,
And would not pass away!

'And rest is sweet, when laurelled fame
Will crown the soldier's crest;
But a brave heart, with a tarnished name,
Would rather fight than rest.'

'Well, thou hast fought for many a year,
Hast fought thy whole life through,
Hast humbled Falsehood, trampled Fear;
What is there left to do?'

'Tis true, this arm has hotly striven,
Has dared what few would dare;
Much have I done, and freely given,
But little learnt to bear!'

'Look on the grave where thou must sleep,
Thy last, and strongest foe;
It is endurance not to weep,
If that repose seem woe.

'The long war closing in defeat—
Defeat serenely borne,—
Thy midnight rest may still be sweet,
And break in glorious morn!'

EMILY BRONTË.

On this Day I complete my thirty-sixth Year

'TIS time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live*?
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

Fox

LOUD is the vale! the voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her voices, one!

Loud is the vale;—this inland depth
In peace is roaring like the sea;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load!
The comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna

NOT a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow !

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring ;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

CHARLES WOLFE.

Wellington

NO more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good grey head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er,
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Nelson

WHO is he that cometh, like an honoured guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gained a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Osler

AN eye whose magic wakes the hidden springs
Of slumbering fancy in the weary mind,
A tongue that dances with the ready word
That like an arrow seeks its chosen goal,
And piercing all the barriers of care,
Opens the way to warming rays of hope ;

A presence like the freshening, quickening breeze
That, passing, sweeps the poisoned cloud aside.
An ear that 'mid the discords of the day
Catches the basic harmonies of life;
A heart whose alchemy transforms the dross
Of dull suspicion to the gold of love;
A spirit like the fragrance of some flower
That lingers round the spot that this has graced,
To tell us that although the rose be plucked
And spread its perfume throughout distant halls,
The vestige of its sweetness quickens still
The conscience of the precinct where it bloomed.

WILLIAM SYDNEY THAYER.

Lines Written on the Western Front, 1916

WE, who lie here, have nothing more to pray.
To all your praises we are deaf and blind.
We may not even know if you betray
Our hope, to make earth better for mankind.

Only our silence in the night shall grow
More silent, as the stars grow in the sky;
And, while you deck our graves, you shall not know
That our eternal peace has passed you by.

For we have heard you say (when we were living)
That some small dream of good would 'cost too much';
But, when the foe struck, we have watched you giving,
And seen you move the mountains with one touch.

What can be done, we know. But, have no fear!
If you fail now, we shall not see or hear.

ALFRED NOYES.

[*August 1914–1919*]

WHY ask to know what date, what clime?
There dwelt our own humanity,
Power-worshippers from earliest time,
Feet-kissers of triumphant crime,
Crushers of helpless misery,
Crushing down Justice, honouring wrong,
If that be feeble, this be strong.

Shedders of blood, shedders of tears,
Fell creatures avid of distress;
Yet mocking heaven with senseless prayers
For mercy on the merciless.

It was the autumn of the year
When grain grows yellow in the ear;
Day after day, from noon to noon,
That August's sun blazed bright as June.

But we with unregarding eyes
Saw panting earth and glowing skies.
No hand the reaper's sickle held,
Nor bound the bright sheaves in the field.

Our corn was garnered months before,
Threshed out and harvested with gore;
Ground when the ears were milky sweet
With furious toil of hoofs and feet;
I, doubly cursed, on foreign sod,
Fought neither for my home nor God.

EMILY BRONTË.

XI

LIBERTY AND THE NATIONS

O ye loud waves! and O ye forests high!
And O ye clouds that far above me soared!
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

The breath of Liberty, like the word of the holy man, will not die with the prophet but will survive him

---

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free.

Why am I a Liberal?

'WHY?' Because all I haply can and do,
All that I am now, all I hope to be,—
Whence comes it save from fortune setting free
Body and soul one purpose to pursue,
God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,
Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men—each in his degree
Also God-guided—bear, and gaily, too?
But little do or can the best of us;
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who then, dares hold—emancipated thus—
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labour freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is 'why'.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Greece

WITHIN the circuit of this pendent orb
There lies an antique region, on which fell
The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn
Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung
Temples and cities and immortal forms
And harmonies of wisdom and of song,
And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair,
And when the sun of its dominion failed,
And when the winter of its glory came,
The winds that stripped it bare blew on and swept
That dew into the utmost wildernesses
In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed
The unmaternal bosom of the North.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic

ONCE did she hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.
She was a maiden city, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day;
Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Thoughts of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland

TWO voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain floods should thunder as before,
And ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful voice be heard by thee!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Sonnet on Chillon

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON.

'When I have borne in memory'

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Turn O Libertad

TURN O Libertad, for the war is over,
From it and all henceforth expanding, doubting no more, resolute, sweeping the world,
Turn from lands retrospective, recording proofs of the past,
From the singers that sing the trailing glories of the past;
From the chants of the feudal world—the triumphs of kings, slavery, caste;
Turn to the world, the triumphs reserv'd and to come—give up that backward world;
Leave to the singers of hitherto—give them the trailing past;

But what remains, remains for singers for you—wars to
come are for you;
(Lo, how the wars of the past have duly inured to you—
and the wars of the present also inure;)
—Then turn, and be not alarm'd, O Libertad—turn your
undying face,
To where the future, greater than all the past,
Is swiftly, surely preparing for you.

WALT WHITMAN.

Hymn

Sung at the Completion of the Concord Monument,
April 19, 1836.

BY the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, or leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Freedom

YET, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North:
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

LORD BYRON.

Nationality

EACH nation master at its own fireside—
The claim is just, and so one day 'twill be;
But a wise race the time of fruit will bide,
Nor pluck th' unripen'd apple from the tree.

JOHN KELLS INGRAM.

XII

CELTIC

I love the wild not less than the good.

The Fairy Fiddler

'TIS I go fiddling, fiddling,
By weedy ways forlorn;
I make the blackbird's music
Ere in his breast 'tis born:
The sleeping larks I waken
'Twixt the midnight and the morn.

No man alive has seen me,
But women hear me play
Sometimes at door or window,
Fiddling the souls away,—
The child's soul and the colleen's
Out of the covering clay.

None of my fairy kinsmen
Make music with me now:
Alone the raths I wander
Or ride the whitethorn bough,
But the wild swans they know me,
And the horse that draws the plough.

NORA HOPPER.

The Dawning of the Day

(*From the Irish*).

AT early dawn I once had been
Where Lene's blue waters flow,
When summer bid the groves be green,
The lamp of light to glow.

As on by bower, and town, and tower,
And wide-spread fields I stray,
I meet a maid in the greenwood shade,
At the dawning of the day.

Her feet and beauteous head were bare,
No mantle fair she wore,
But down her waist fell golden hair
That swept the tall grass o'er;
With milking-pail she sought the vale,
And bright her charms' display,
Outshining far the morning star,
At the dawning of the day.

Beside me sat that maid divine,
Where grassy banks outspread—
'Oh, let me call thee ever mine,
Dear maid,' I sportive said.
'False man, for shame, why bring me blame?'
She cried, and burst away—
The sun's first light pursued her flight,
At the dawning of the day.

EDWARD WALSH.

The Wind on the Hills

GO not to the hills of Erinn
When the night winds are about,
Put up your bar and shutter,
And so keep the danger out.

For the good-folk whirl within it,
And they pull you by the hand,
And they push you on the shoulder,
Till you move to their command.

And lo! you have forgotten
What you have known of tears,
And you will not remember
That the world goes full of years.

A year there is a lifetime,
And a second but a day,
And an older world will meet you
Each morn you come away.

Your wife grows old with weeping,
And your children one by one
Grow grey with nights of watching,
Before your dance is done.

And it will chance some morning
You will come home no more;
Your wife sees but a withered leaf
In the wind about the door.

And your children will inherit
The unrest of the wind,
They shall seek some face elusive,
And some land they never find.

When the wind is loud, they sighing
Go with hearts unsatisfied,
For some joy beyond remembrance,
For some memory denied.

And all your children's children,
They cannot sleep or rest,
When the wind is out in Erinn
And the sun is in the west.

DORA SIGERSON.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

Old Ireland

FAR hence, amid an isle of wondrous beauty,
Crouching over a grave, an ancient sorrowful mother,
Once a queen—now lean and tatter'd, seated on the ground,
Her old white hair drooping dishevel'd round her shoulders;
At her feet fallen an unused royal harp,
Long silent—she too long silent—mourning her shrouded hope and heir;
Of all the earth her heart most full of sorrow, because most full of love.

Yet a word, ancient mother;
You need crouch there no longer on the cold ground, with forehead between your knees;
O you need not sit there, veil'd in your old white hair, so dishevel'd;
For know you, the one you mourn is not in that grave;
It was an illusion—the heir, the son you love, was not really dead;
The Lord is not dead—he is risen again, young and strong, in another country;
Even while you wept there by your fallen harp, by the grave,
What you wept for, was translated, pass'd from the grave,
The winds favour'd and the sea sail'd it,
And now with rosy and new blood,
Moves to-day in a new country.

WALT WHITMAN.

After Death

SHALL mine eyes behold thy glory, O my country? shall mine eyes behold thy glory?
Or shall the darkness close around them, ere the sun-blaze break at last upon thy story?

When the nations ope for thee their queenly circle, as a sweet new sister hail thee,
Shall these lips be sealed in callous death and silence, that have known but to bewail thee?

Shall the ear be deaf that only loved thy praises, when all men their tribute bring thee?
Shall the mouth be clay that sang thee in thy squalor, when all poets' mouths shall sing thee?

Ah! the harpings and the salvos and the shoutings of thy exiled sons returning!
I should hear, tho' dead and mouldered, and the grave-damps should not chill my bosom's burning.

Ah! the tramp of feet victorious! I should hear them 'mid the shamrocks and the mosses,
And my heart should toss within the shroud and quiver as a captive dreamer tosses.

I should turn and rend the cere-clothes round me, giant-sinews I should borrow—
Crying, 'O my brothers, I have also loved her in her loneliness and sorrow.

'Let me join with you the jubilant procession; let me chant with you her story;
Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks, now mine eyes have seen her glory.'

FANNY PARNELL.

'There swept adown that dreary glen'

THERE swept adown that dreary glen
A wilder sound than mountain wind—
The thrilling shouts of fighting men,
With something sadder far behind.

The thrilling shouts they died away
  Before the night came greyly down,
But closed not with the closing day
  The choking sob, the tortured moan.

Down in a hollow sunk in shade,
  Where dark forms waved in secret gloom,
A ruined, bleeding form was laid,
  Waiting the death that was to come.

EMILY BRONTË.

A Lyke-wake Song

FAIR of face, full of pride,
  Sit ye down by a dead man's side.

Ye sang songs a' the day:
Sit down at night in the red worm's way.

Proud ye were a' day long:
Ye'll be but lean at evensong.

Ye had gowd kells on your hair!
Nae man kens what ye were.

Ye set scorn by the silken stuff:
Now the grave is clean enough.

Ye set scorn by the rubis ring:
Now the worm is a saft sweet thing.

Fine gold and blithe fair face,
Ye are come to a grimly place.

Gold hair and glad grey een,
Nae man kens if ye have been.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Into the Twilight

OUT-WORN heart, in a time out-worn,
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
Laugh, heart, again in the grey twilight,
Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.

Your mother Eire is always young,
Dew ever shining and twilight grey;
Though hope fall from you and love decay,
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.

Come, heart, where hill is heaped upon hill:
For there the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
And river and stream work out their will;

And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight;
And love is less kind than the grey twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

Self-discipline

WHEN the soul sought refuge in the place of rest,
Overborne by strife and pain beyond control,
From some secret hollow, whisper soft-confessed,
Came the legend of the soul.

Some bright one of old time laid his sceptre down
So his heart might learn of sweet and bitter truth;
Going forth bereft of beauty, throne, and crown,
And the sweetness of his youth.

So the old appeal and fierce revolt we make
Through the world's hour dies within our primal will;
And we justify the pain and hearts that break,
And our lofty doom fulfil.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL.

A Rose will fade

YOU were always a dreamer, Rose, red Rose,
As you swung on your perfumed spray,
Swinging, and all the world was true,
Swaying, what did it trouble you?
A rose will fade in a day.

Why did you smile to his face, red Rose,
As he whistled across your way?
And all the world went mad for you,
All the world it knelt to woo.
A rose will bloom in a day.

I gather your petals, Rose, red Rose,
The petals he threw away.
And all the world derided you;
Ah! the world, how well it knew
A rose will fade in a day.

DORA SIGERSON.

Beauty's a Flower

YOUTH'S for an hour,
Beauty's a flower,
But love is the jewel that wins the world.

Youth's for an hour, an' the taste o' life is sweet.
Ailes was a girl that stepped on two bare feet;
In all my days I never seen the one as fair as she,
I'd have lost my life for Ailes, an' she never cared for me.

Beauty's a flower, an' the days o' life are long,
There's little knowin' who may live to sing another song:
For Ailes was the fairest, but another is my wife,
An' Mary—God be good to her!—is all I love in life.

Youth's for an hour,
Beauty's a flower,
But love is the jewel that wins the world.

MOIRA O'NEILL.

The Gate-keeper

ROUGH gown, stuff gown, my love hath noble raiment.
Silk robes and scarlet robes, pearls of great price:
If a man kiss her gown, death is his payment—
'*Nay: but I keep the gates of Paradise.*'

Chained hand, stained hand, my love has fingers whiter
Than any lily that rocks upon the lake:
If a man kiss her hand death falls the lighter—
'*She sends thee sleeping fast? I bid thee wake.*'

THE GATE-KEEPER

Bare head, fair head, my love's head on her pillow
Black as a bird's wing lies, circled with gold:
If a man touch it, he swings from a willow—
'Doth her love burn thee so? My breast is cold.'

Torn wings, shorn wings, my love goeth wingless:
She is wind and water, fire that upward springs.
Ere I died praising her I left my harp all stringless.
'From my stripped pinions my children make them wings.'

Grave eyes, brave eyes, wert thou fain to bear them?
Once my love in childbed lay, and cried for pain.
I, too, bore dreams with tears, and the four winds tare them.
'My children are thy dreams warm with life again.'

End me or mend me: heavy is my burden!
Years ago we died, and I claim her sins for mine.
So she walks heaven's paths hell shall be my guerdon—
'I who ope the gate to thee was once that love of thine.'

NORA HOPPER.

The White Peace

IT lies not on the sunlit hill
Nor on the sunlit plain;
Nor ever on any running stream
Nor on the unclouded main—

But sometimes, through the Soul of Man,
Slow moving o'er his pain,
The moonlight of a perfect peace
Floods heart and brain.

'FIONA MACLEOD' (WILLIAM SHARP.)

XIII

DE AMICITIA

Friends are ourselves.

Friends, such as we desire, are dreams and fables.

All things through thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth,
The mill-round of our fate appears
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me too thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair.

Apparitions

SUCH a starved bank of moss
Till that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across;
Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face.

ROBERT BROWNING.

From 'In Memoriam'

THE churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, through all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale.

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind:

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

From 'In Memoriam'

DOST thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

FROM 'IN MEMORIAM'

Who makes by force his merit known
  And lives to clutch the golden keys,
  To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
  Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
  The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
  When all his active powers are still,
  A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
  While yet beside its vocal springs
  He played at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
  And reaps the labour of his hands,
  Or in the furrow musing stands;
'Does my old friend remember me?'

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Fair-weather Friend

BECAUSE I mourned to see thee fall
From where I mounted thee,
Because I did not find thee all
I feigned a friend should be;
Because things are not what they seem,
And this our world is full of dream,—
Because thou lovest sunny weather,
Am I to lose thee altogether?

I know harsh words have found their way,
Which I would fain recall;
And angry passions had their day,
But now—forget them all;
Now that I only ask to share
Thy presence, like some pleasant air,
Now that my gravest thoughts will bend
To thy light mind, fair-weather friend!

See! I am careful to atone
My spirit's voice to thine;
My talk shall be of mirth alone,
Of music, flowers, and wine!
I will not breathe an earnest breath,
I will not think of life or death,
I will not dream of any end,
While thou art here, fair-weather friend!

Delusion brought me only woe,
I take thee as thou art;
Let thy gay verdure overgrow
My deep and serious heart!

FAIR-WEATHER FRIEND

Let me enjoy thy laugh, and sit
Within the radiance of thy wit,
And lean where'er thy humours tend,
Taking fair weather from my friend.

Or, if I see my doom is traced
By fortune's sterner pen,
And pain and sorrow must be faced,—
Well, thou canst leave me then;
And fear not lest some faint reproach
Should on thy happy hours encroach;
Nay, blessings on thy steps attend,
Where'er they turn, fair-weather friend!

R. M. Milnes, Lord Houghton.

Qua Cursum Ventus

AS ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
Of those, whom year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged.

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered—
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze! and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
At last, at last, unite them there!

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

From 'Christabel'

ALAS! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another

To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between;—
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

After

TAKE the cloak from his face, and at first
Let the corpse do its worst.

How he lies in his rights of a man!
Death has done all death can.
And, absorbed in the new life he leads,
He recks not, he heeds
Nor his wrong nor my vengeance—both strike
On his senses alike,
And are lost in the solemn and strange
Surprise of the change.

Ha, what avails death to erase
His offence, my disgrace?
I would we were boys as of old
In the field, by the fold:
His outrage, God's patience, man's scorn
Were so easily borne.

I stand here now, he lies in his place:
Cover the face.

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Old Familiar Faces

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies,
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her,—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood.
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

CHARLES LAMB.

XIV

THE UNFORGOTTEN

Je n'ai pas oublié, voisine de la ville,
Notre blanche maison, petite mais tranquille ;
Sa Pomone de plâtre et sa vieille Vénus
Dans un bosquet chétif cachant leurs membres nus,
Et le soleil, le soir, ruisselant et superbe,
Qui, derrière la vitre où se brisait sa gerbe,
Semblait, grand œil ouvert dans le ciel curieux,
Contempler nos dîners longs et silencieux,
Répandant largement ses beaux reflets de cierge
Sur la nappe frugale et les rideaux de serge.

Et tu mourus aussi. Seul, l'âme désolée,
Mais toujours calme et bon, sans te plaindre du sort
Tu marchais en chantant dans ta route isolée.
L'heure dernière vint, tant de fois appelée.
Tu la vis arriver sans crainte et sans remord,
Et tu goûtus en enfin le charme de la mort.

A Baby's Epitaph

APRIL made me: winter laid me here away asleep.
Bright as Maytime was my daytime; night is soft and deep:
Though the morrow bring forth sorrow, well are ye that weep.

Ye that held me dear beheld me not a twelvemonth long:
All the while ye saw me smile, ye knew not whence the song
Came that made me smile, and laid me here, and wrought you wrong.

Angels, calling from your brawling world one undefiled,
Homeward bade me, and forbade me here to rest beguiled:
Here I sleep not: pass, and weep not here upon your child.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Delia

SWEET as the tender fragrance that survives,
When martyred flowers breathe out their little lives,
Sweet as a song that once consoled our pain,
But never will be sung to us again,
Is thy remembrance. Now the hour of rest
Hath come to thee. Sleep, darling, it is best.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

On Salathiel Pavy, a Child of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel

WEEP with me, all you that read
This little story;
And know, for whom a tear you shed,
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As Heaven and Nature seemed to strive
Which owned the creature.

Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When Fates turned cruel;
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;
And did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duly,
As sooth the Parcae thought him one,
He played so truly.

So, by error, to his fate
They all consented;
But, viewing him since (alas, too late!),
They have repented;
And have sought, to give new birth,
In baths to steep him:
But, being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vows to keep him.

BEN JONSON.

Early Death

SHE passed away like morning dew
Before the sun was high;
So brief her time, she scarcely knew
The meaning of a sigh.

As round the rose its soft perfume,
Sweet love around her floated;
Admired she grew—while mortal doom
Crept on, unfeared, unnoted.

Love was her guardian Angel here,
But Love to Death resigned her;
Though Love was kind, why should we fear
But holy Death is kinder?

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

In the Old House

IN the old house where we dwelt
No care had come, no grief we knew,
No memory of the past we felt,
No doubt assailed us when we knelt;
It is not so in the new.

In the old house where we grew
From childhood up, the days were dreams,
The summers had unwonted gleams,
The sun a warmer radiance threw
Upon the stair. Alas! it seems
All different in the new!

Our mother still could sing the strain
In earlier days we listened to;
The white threads in her hair were few,
She seldom sighed or suffered pain,
Oh for the old house back again!
It is not so in the new.

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Surprised by Joy

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss?—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Lines Written by a Death-bed

YES, now the longing is o'erpast,
Which, dogged by fear and fought by shame,
Shook her weak bosom day and night,
Consumed her beauty like a flame,
And dimmed it like the desert blast.
And though the curtains hide her face,
Yet were it lifted to the light
The sweet expression of her brow
Would charm the gazer, till his thought
Erased the ravages of time,
Filled up the hollow cheek, and brought
A freshness back as of her prime—
So healing is her quiet now.
So perfectly the lines express
A placid, settled loveliness;
Her youngest rival's freshest grace.

But ah, though peace indeed is here,
And ease from shame, and rest from fear;
Though nothing can dismarble now
The smoothness of that limpid brow;
Yet is a calm like this, in truth,
The crowning end of life and youth?
And when this boon rewards the dead,
Are all debts paid, has all been said?
And is the heart of youth so light,
Its step so firm, its eye so bright,
Because on its hot brow there blows
A wind of promise and repose
From the far grave, to which it goes?

Because it has the hope to come,
One day, to harbour in the tomb?
Ah no, the bliss youth dreams is one
For daylight, for the cheerful sun,
For feeling nerves and living breath—
Youth dreams a bliss on this side death!
It dreams a rest, if not more deep,
More grateful than this marble sleep.
It hears a voice within it tell—
'Calm 's not life's crown, though calm is well.'
'Tis all perhaps which man acquires:
But 'tis not what our youth desires.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Dirge

FEAR no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

DIRGE

Fear no more the lightning-flash
  Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
  Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

The Death of Artemidora

'ARTEMIDORA! Gods invisible,
  While thou art lying faint along the couch,
Have tied the sandal to thy slender feet,
And stand beside thee, ready to convey
Thy weary steps where other rivers flow.
Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
Away, and voices like thine own come near
And nearer, and solicit an embrace.'
  Artemidora sighed, and would have pressed
The hand now pressing hers, but was too weak.
Iris stood over her dark hair unseen
While thus Elpenor spake. He looked into
Eyes that had given light and life erewhile
To those above them, but now dim with tears
And wakefulness. Again he spake of joy
Eternal. At that word, that sad word, *joy*,
Faithful and fond her bosom heaved once more:
Her head fell back: and now a loud deep sob
Swelled through the darkened chamber; 'twas not hers.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

From 'Homeward Bound'

THUS in the gloom and solitude of thought
I wandered long, till on my lonely path
Thy influence arose. In thee I found
A sacred spot in which the wearied soul
At length might rest—for thou hast been to me
Dear as to night the crystal stars that shine
Like pleasures nestling in her gloomy heart.
From thee, dear wife, I learned how Love can graft
A stronger plume on Life's dishevelled wing—
How, turning to the earth from which it sprang,
The spirit gathers strength, and yet may find
In daily rounds of duty and of love
The sands of life still sparkling as they flow.

We cannot fly our shadows or escape
The innate temp'rament that moulds our lives
To happiness or gloom. Its mighty stress,
Stronger than reason, conduct, circumstance,
Gives colour to our thoughts; the mind best strung
Can suffer most, and he who most aspires
To truth and knowledge and ideal good
Most keenly feels the impotence of life.
The shadows lengthen as the night draws on,
And youth's bright hues can never be recalled;
But Love and Duty linger, Habit smoothes
With kindly hand the steep descent of life;
And through the gathering mists Hope whispers still,
We yet may find, we know not how or where,
The highest and the happiest the same.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

'When Death to either shall come'

WHEN Death to either shall come,—
I pray it be first to me,—
Be happy as ever at home,
If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own;
And sing to the child on thy knee,
Or read to thyself alone
The songs that I made for thee.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

Remembrance

COLD in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second moon has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

EMILY BRONTË.

The Last Memory

WHEN I am old, and think of the old days,
And warm my hands before a little blaze,
Having forgotten love, hope, fear, desire,
I shall see, smiling out of the pale fire,
One face, mysterious and exquisite;
And I shall gaze, and ponder over it,
Wondering, was it Leonardo wrought
That stealthy ardency, where passionate thought
Burns inward, a revealing flame, and glows
To the last ecstacy, which is repose?
Was it Bronzino, those Borghese eyes?
And, musing thus among my memories,
O unforgotten! you will come to seem,
As pictures do, remembered, some old dream.
And I shall think of you as something strange,
And beautiful, and full of helpless change,
Which I beheld and carried in my heart;
But you, I loved, will have become a part
Of the eternal mystery, and love
Like a dim pain; and I shall bend above
My little fire, and shiver, being cold,
When you are no more young, and I am old.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

In the Valley of Cauterets

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walked with one I loved two-and-thirty years ago.
All along the valley while I walked to-day,
The two-and-thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

XV

VERITATEM DILEXI

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze and there aspire.

Quand j'ai connu la Vérité,
J'ai cru que c'était une amie;
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentie
J'en étais déjà dégoûté.

Et pourtant elle est éternelle,
Et ceux qui se sont passés d'elle
Ici-bas ont tout ignoré.

The Dervish whined to Said,
'Thou didst not tarry while I prayed.
Beware the fire that Eblis burned.'
But Saadi coldly thus returned,
'Once with manlike love and fear
I gave thee for an hour my ear,
I kept the sun and stars at bay,
And love, for words thy tongue could say.
I cannot sell my heaven again
For all that rattles in thy brain.'

Urania

I TOO have suffered: yet I know
She is not cold, though she seems so:
She is not cold, she is not light;
But our ignoble souls lack might.

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,
While we for hopeless passion die;
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,
Were but men nobler than they are.

Eagerly once her gracious ken
Was turned upon the sons of men.
But light the serious visage grew—
She looked, and smiled, and saw them through.

Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our laboured, puny passion-fits—
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we
Scorn them as bitterly as she!

Yet oh, that Fate would let her see
One of some worthier race than we;
One for whose sake she once might prove
How deeply she who scorns can love.

His eyes be like the starry lights—
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe!

And she to him will reach her hand,
And gazing in his eyes will stand,
And know her friend, and weep for glee,
And cry—*Long, long I've looked for thee.*—

Then will she weep—with smiles, till then,
Coldly she mocks the sons of men.
Till then her lovely eyes maintain
Their gay, unwavering, deep disdain.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Brahma

IF the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Failure

BECAUSE God put His adamantine fate
Between my sullen heart and its desire,
I swore that I would burst the Iron Gate,
Rise up, and curse Him on His throne of fire.
Earth shuddered at my crown of blasphemy,
But Love was as a flame about my feet;
Proud up the Golden Stair I strode; and beat
Thrice on the Gate, and entered with a cry—

All the great courts were quiet in the sun,
And full of vacant echoes: moss had grown
Over the glassy pavement, and begun
To creep within the dusty council-halls.
An idle wind blew round an empty throne
And stirred the heavy curtains on the walls.

RUPERT BROOKE.

The Divinity

'YES, write it in the rock!' Saint Bernard said,
'Grave it on brass with adamantine pen!
'Tis God himself becomes apparent, when
God's wisdom and God's goodness are displayed,

'For God of these his attributes is made.'—
Well spake the impetuous Saint, and bore of men
The suffrage captive; now, not one in ten
Recalls the obscure opposer he outweighed.

God's wisdom and *God's goodness !*—Ay, but fools
Mis-define these till God knows them no more.
Wisdom and goodness, they are God !—what schools

Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore ?
This no Saint preaches, and this no Church rules ;
'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Sursum Corda

SEEK not the spirit, if it hide
Inexorable to thy zeal :
Trembler, do not whine and chide :
Art thou not also real ?
Why shouldst thou stoop to poor excuse ?
Turn on the accuser roundly ; say,
'Here am I, here will I abide
For ever to myself soothfast ;
Go thou, sweet Heaven, or at thy pleasure stay !'
Already Heaven with thee its lot has cast,
For only it can absolutely deal.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The Bohemian Hymn

IN many forms we try
To utter God's infinity,
But the Boundless hath no form,
And the Universal Friend
Doth as far transcend
An angel as a worm.

THE BOHEMIAN HYMN

The great Idea baffles wit,
Language falters under it,
It leaves the learned in the lurch ;
Nor art, nor power, nor toil can find
The measure of the eternal Mind,
Nor hymn, nor prayer, nor church.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

To a Friend

WHO prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind ?
He much, the old man, who, clearest-souled of men,
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus' hill, and Smyrna's bay, though blind.
Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Cleared Rome of what most shamed him. But be his
My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
Business could not make dull, nor Passion wild :
Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole :
The mellow glory of the Attic stage ;
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Alphonso of Castile

I, ALPHONSO, live and learn,
Seeing Nature go astern.
Things deteriorate in kind;
Lemons run to leaves and rind;
Meagre crop of figs and limes;
Shorter days and harder times.
Flowering April cools and dies
In the insufficient skies.
Imps, at high midsummer, blot
Half the sun's disk with a spot:
'Twill not now avail to tan
Orange cheek or skin of man.
Roses bleach, the goats are dry,
Lisbon quakes, the people cry.
Yon pale, scrawny fisher fools,
Gaunt as bitterns in the pools,
Are no brothers of my blood;—
They discredit Adamhood.
Eyes of gods! ye must have seen
O'er your ramparts as ye lean,
The general debility;
Of genius the sterility;
Mighty projects countermanded;
Rash ambition, broken-handed;
Puny man and scentless rose
Tormenting Pan to double the dose.
Rebuild or ruin: either fill
Of vital force the wasted rill,
Or tumble all again in heap
To weltering chaos and to sleep.

Say, Seigniors, are the old Niles dry,
Which fed the veins of earth and sky,
That mortals miss the loyal heats,
Which drove them erst to social feats;
Now, to a savage selfness grown,
Think nature barely serves for one;
With science poorly mask their hurt,
And vex the gods with question pert,
Immensely curious whether you
Still are rulers, or mildew?

Masters, I 'm in pain with you;
Masters, I 'll be plain with you;
In my palace of Castile,
I, a king, for kings can feel.
There my thoughts the matter roll,
And solve and oft resolve the whole.
And, for I'm styled Alphonse the Wise,
Ye shall not fail for sound advice.
Before ye want a drop of rain,
Hear the sentiment of Spain.

You have tried famine: no more try it
Ply us now with a full diet;
Teach your pupils now with plenty;
For one sun supply us twenty.
I have thought it thoroughly over,—
State of hermit, state of lover;
We must have society,
We cannot spare variety.
Hear you, then, celestial fellows!
Fits not to be over-zealous;

Steads not to work on the clean jump,
Nor wine nor brains perpetual pump.
Men and gods are too extense;
Could you slacken and condense?
Your rank overgrowths reduce
Till your kinds abound with juice?
Earth, crowded, cries, 'Too many men!'
My counsel is, kill nine in ten,
And bestow the shares of all
On the remnant decimal.
Add their nine lives to this cat;
Stuff their nine brains in his hat;
Make his frame and forces square
With the labours he must dare;
Thatch his flesh, and even his years
With the marble which he rears.
There, growing slowly old at ease,
No faster than his planted trees,
He may, by warrant of his age,
In schemes of broader scope engage.
So shall ye have a man of the sphere
Fit to grace the solar year.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Patience

PATIENCE! why, 'tis the soul of peace:
Of all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to heaven:
It makes men look like gods.—The best of men
That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

THOMAS DEKKER.

Shipwreck

WE, who by shipwreck only find the shores
Of divine wisdom, can but kneel at first,
Can but exult to find beneath our feet,
That long stretched vainly down the yielding deeps,
The shock and sustenance of solid earth ;
Inland afar we see what temples gleam
Through immemorial stems of sacred groves,
And we conjecture shining shapes therein ;
Yet for a space 'tis good to wander here
Among the shells and seaweed of the beach.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

In a Lecture-Room

AWAY, haunt thou not me,
Thou vain Philosophy !
Little hast thou bestead,
Save to perplex the head,
And leave the spirit dead.
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
While from the secret treasure-depths below,
Fed by the skiey shower,
And clouds that sink and rest on hill-tops high,
Wisdom at once, and Power,
Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly ?
Why labour at the dull mechanic oar,
When the fresh breeze is blowing,
And the strong current flowing,
Right onward to the Eternal Shore ?

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

The Wayfarer

I WILL reach far down in the pit of sorrow
And gather song,
With the bitter past I will deck to-morrow.

I will turn no cowardly look behind me
But still fare on
Till the glow of ultimate joy shall blind me;

For I ask no blessing and no forgiving,
The gain was mine,
Since I learned from all things the truth of living.

HELEN GRANVILLE BARKER.

Astraea

YET shine forever virgin minds,
Loved by stars and purest winds,
Which, o'er passion throned sedate,
Have not hazarded their state;
Disconcert the searching spy,
Rendering to a curious eye
The durance of a granite ledge
To those who gaze from the sea's edge.
It is there for benefit;
It is there for purging light;
There for purifying storms;
And its depths reflect all forms;
It cannot parley with the mean,—
Pure by impure is not seen.
For there's no sequestered grot,
Lone mountain tarn, or isle forgot,
But Justice, journeying in the sphere,
Daily stoops to harbour there.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The Old Stoic

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, 'Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!'

Yes, as my swift days near their goal
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

EMILY BRONTË.

Heroism

RUBY wine is drunk by knaves,
Sugar spends to fatten slaves,
Rose and vine-leaf deck buffoons;
Thunder-clouds are Jove's festoons,
Drooping oft in wreaths of dread,
Lightning-knotted round his head;
The hero is not fed on sweets,
Daily his own heart he eats;
Chambers of the great are jails,
And head-winds right for royal sails.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The World's Triumphs

SO far as I conceive the World's rebuke
To him addressed who would recast her new,
Not from herself her fame of strength she took,
But from their weakness, who would work her rue.
'Behold', she cries, 'so many rages lulled,
So many fiery spirits quite cooled down:
Look how so many valours, long undulled,
After short commerce with me, fear my frown.
Thou too, when thou against my crimes wouldst cry,
Let thy foreboded homage check thy tongue.'—
The World speaks well: yet might her foe reply—
'Are wills so weak? then let not mine wait long.
Hast thou so rare a poison? let me be
Keener to slay thee, lest thou poison me.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Ode to Duty

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:

Glad hearts ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do thy work, and know it not :
Oh ! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust :
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge

TAX not the royal saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed scholars only—this immense
And glorious work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Sacrifice

THOUGH love repine, and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,—
'Tis man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die.'

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Written in Emerson's Essays

'O MONSTROUS, dead, unprofitable world,
That thou canst hear, and hearing, hold thy way.
A voice oracular hath pealed to-day,
To-day a hero's banner is unfurled.
Hast thou no lip for welcome?' So I said.
Man after man, the world smiled and passed by:
A smile of wistful incredulity
As though one spake of noise unto the dead:
Scornful, and strange, and sorrowful; and full
Of bitter knowledge. Yet the Will is free:
Strong is the Soul, and wise, and beautiful:
The seeds of godlike power are in us still:
Gods are we, Bards, Saints, Heroes, if we will.—
Dumb judges, answer, truth or mockery?

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Social Heredity

MAN is no mushroom growth of yesterday.
His roots strike deep into the hallowed mould
Of the dead centuries; ordinances old
Govern us, whether gladly we obey,

Or vainly struggle to resist their sway :
Our thoughts by ancient thinkers are controlled.
And many a word in which our thoughts are told
Was coined long since in regions far away.
The strong-souled nations, destined to be great,
Honour their sires and reverence the Past ;
They cherish and improve their heritage.
The weak, in blind self-trust or headlong rage,
The olden time's transmitted treasure cast
Behind them, and bemoan their loss too late.

JOHN KELLS INGRAM.

Labour and Love

LABOUR and love ! there are no other laws
To rule the liberal action of that soul
Which faith hath set beneath thy brief control.
Or lull the empty fear that racks and gnaws :

Labour ! then, like a rising moon, the cause
Of life shall light thine hour from pole to pole ;
Thou shalt taste health of purpose, and the roll
Of simple joys unwind without a pause.

Love ! and thy heart shall cease to question why
Its beating pulse was set to rock and rave ;
Find but another heart this side the grave

To soothe and cling to,—thou hast life's reply.
Labour and love ! then fade without a sigh,
Submerged beneath the inexorable wave.

EDMUND GOSSE.

XVI

TAEDIUM VITAE

La chair est triste, hélas, et j'ai lu tous les livres.

Ne suis-je pas un faux accord
dans la divine symphonie,
Grâce à la vorace Ironie
Qui me secoue et qui me mord ?

Pour qui sait pénétrer, Nature, dans tes voies,
L'illusion t'enserre et ta surface ment :
Au fond de tes fureurs comme au fond de tes joies,
Ta force est sans ivresse et sans emportement.

Tel, parmi les sanglots, les rires et les haines,
Heureux qui porte en soi, d'indifférence empli,
Un impassible cœur, sourd aux rumeurs humaines,
Un gouffre inviolé de silence et d'oubli !

La vie a beau frémir autour de ce cœur morne,
Muet comme un ascète absorbé par son Dieu ;
Tout roule sans écho dans son ombre sans borne
Et rien n'y luit du ciel, hormis un trait de feu.

Mais ce peu de lumière à ce néant fidèle
C'est le reflet perdu des espaces meilleurs ;
C'est ton rapide éclair, espérance éternelle !
Qui l'éveille en sa tombe et le convie ailleurs.

Autumn Song

KNOW'ST thou not at the fall of the leaf
How the heart feels a languid grief
Laid on it for a covering,
And how sleep seems a goodly thing
In Autumn at the fall of the leaf?

And how the swift beat of the brain
Falters because it is in vain,
In Autumn at the fall of the leaf,
Knowest thou not? and how the chief
Of joys seems—not to suffer pain?

Know'st thou not at the fall of the leaf
How the soul feels like a dried sheaf
Bound up at length for harvesting,
And how death seems a comely thing
In Autumn at the fall of the leaf?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

Fame, Love, and Youth

LOOK down, look down from your glittering heights
And tell us, ye sons of glory,
The joys and the pangs of your eagle flights,
The triumph that crowned the story—

The rapture that thrilled when the goal was won,
The goal of a life's desire;
And a voice replied from the setting sun—
Nay, the dearest and best lies nigher.

How oft in such hours our fond thoughts stray
To the dream of two idle lovers;
To the young wife's kiss; to the child at play,
Or the grave which the long grass covers;

And little we'd reck of power and gold,
And of all life's vain endeavour,
If the heart could glow as it glowed of old,
And if youth could abide for ever.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

Psyche

THE butterfly the ancient Grecians made
The soul's fair emblem, and its only name—
But of the soul, escaped the slavish trade
Of mortal life!—For in this earthly frame
Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,
Manifold motions making little speed,
And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

Philosopher

PHILOSOPHERS are lined with eyes within,
And, being so, the sage unmakes the man.
In love, he cannot therefore cease his trade;
Scarce the first blush has overspread his cheek,
He feels it, introverts his learned eye
To catch the unconscious heart in the very act.

His mother died,—the only friend he had,—
Some tears escaped, but his philosophy
Couched like a cat sat watching close behind
And throttled all his passion. Is 't not like
That devil-spider that devours her mate
Scarce freed from her embraces?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Mutability

WE are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away;

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Naught may endure but Mutability.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Perchè pensa? Pensando s' invecchia

TO spend uncounted years of pain,
Again, again, and yet again,
In working out in heart and brain
The problem of our being here;
To gather facts from far and near,
Upon the mind to hold them clear,
And, knowing more may yet appear,
Unto one's latest breath to fear
The premature result to draw—
Is this the object, end and law,
And purpose of our being here?

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

A Lament

O WORLD! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Never Return

'NEVER return! Time writes these little words
On palace and on hamlet; strife is vain;
First-love returns not,—friendship comes not back,—
Glory revives not. Things are given us once,
And only once; yet we may keep them ours,
If, like this day, we take them out of time,
And make them portions of the constant peace
Which is the shadow of eternity!'
So ended the serene Philosopher;
And to all minds the sad persuasive truth
Found an immediate access; the poor youth,
Whose spirit was but now a-fire with hope,
Cast down his quenched enthusiastic eyes.
'Never return!' in many various tones,
All grave, yet none wholly disconsolate,
Was echoed, amid parting signs of love,
As they went on their common homeward way.
Silent above, the multitudinous stars
Said, 'We are steadfast,—we are not as Ye.'
Silent the fields, up to the phantom hills,
Said, 'We are dreaming of the vanished days
Which we shall see again, but Ye no more.'
So heavy pressed the meditative calm
On those full hearts, that all rejoiced to hear
The shrill cicala, clittering from below,
Call on the fire-flies dancing through the vines.

R. M. MILNES, LORD HOUGHTON.

Undeveloped Lives

NOT every thought can find its words,
Not all within is known;
For minds and hearts have many chords
That never yield their tone.

Tastes, instincts, feelings, passions, powers,
Sleep there unfelt, unseen;
And other lives lie hid in ours—
The lives that might have been—

Affections whose transforming force
Could mould the heart anew;
Strong motives that might change the course
Of all we think and do.

Upon the tall cliff's cloud-wrapt verge
The lonely shepherd stands,
And hears the thundering ocean surge
That sweeps the far-off strands;

And thinks in peace of raging storms
Where he will never be—
Of life in all its unknown forms
In lands beyond the sea.

So in our dream some glimpse appears,
Though soon it fades again,
How other lands or times or spheres
Might make us other men;

How half our being lies in trance,
  Nor joy nor sorrow brings,
Unless the hand of circumstance
  Can touch the latent strings.

We know not fully what we are,
  Still less what we might be:
But hear faint voices from the far
  Dim lands beyond the sea.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

'All things are sold'

ALL things are sold: the very light of Heaven
  Is venal: earth's unsparing gifts of love,
The smallest and most despicable things
That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance which the laws allow
Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human love
Should urge him to perform instinctively,
Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign.
Even love is sold; the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms,
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism, has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs
Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest
Sets no great value on his hireling faith:
A little passing pomp, some servile souls,
Whom cowardice itself might safely chain,
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.
More daring crime requires a loftier meed:
Without a shudder, the slave-soldier lends
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart,
When the dread eloquence of dying men,
Low mingling on the lonely field of fame,
Assails that nature, whose applause he sells
For the gross blessings of a patriot mob,
For the vile gratitude of heartless kings,
And for a cold world's good word,—viler still!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Vanitas Vanitatum

WITH baubles and phantoms and nicknames we end as we began,
But the doll gives more joy to the child than the Garter can give to the man,
And the dreams of our youth are better than all the wisdom of age,
And the heart of the schoolgirl beats happier than the heart of the king or the sage,
And the silliest charm gives more comfort to thousands in sorrow and pain
Than they ever will get from the knowledge that proves it so foolish and vain.

VANITAS VANITATUM

If the measure of worth be but happiness, if this be the
key-note of life,
Illusion is better than knowledge, as slumber is better than
strife;
For we know not where we come from, and we know not
whither we go;
And the best of all our knowledge is how little we can
know.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

The Street

THEY pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,
Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,
Hugging their bodies round them like thin shrouds
Wherein their souls were buried long ago:
They trampled on their youth, and faith, and love,
They cast their hope of human-kind away,
With Heaven's clear messages they madly strove,
And conquered,—and their spirits turned to clay:
Lo! how they wander round the world, their grave,
Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,
Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,
'We, only, truly live, but ye are dead.'
Alas! poor fools, the anointed eye may trace
A dead soul's epitaph in every face!

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

The One Certainty

VANITY of vanities, the Preacher saith,
All things are vanity. The eye and ear
Cannot be filled with what they see and hear.
Like early dew, or like the sudden breath
Of wind, or like the grass that withereth,
Is man, tossed to and fro by hope and fear:
So little joy hath he, so little cheer,
Till all things end in the long dust of death.
To-day is still the same as yesterday,
To-morrow also even as one of them;
And there is nothing new under the sun:
Until the ancient race of Time be run,
The old thorns shall grow out of the old stem,
And morning shall be cold and twilight grey.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

Nemesis

THE voice of the afflicted is rising to the sun,
The thousands who have perished for the selfishness of one,
The judgement seat polluted, the altar overthrown,
The sighing of the exile, the tortured captive's groan,
The many crushed and plundered to gratify the few,
The hounds of hate pursuing the noble and the true;
But vengeance follows surely, and her strokes are fierce and wild,
For the storm-cloud was in labour, and the lightning was its child.

When the tyrants are all buried and the evil laws repealed,
When upright men are ruling and every wrong seems healed,
Then the ancient feud reopens and the tardy bolt is cast,
And the land is filled with bloodshed for the evils of the past,
And men will talk of justice as the storm of carnage raves,
And the innocent are murdered for the guilty in their graves!
Oh God! what sights are witnessed upon this earthly ball,
And the things that men call justice are often worst of all.

The servitude of ages leaves its impress on a race,
Because the fathers suffered, the children's hearts are base,
You cannot win by kindness, in vain you break the chain;
The hatred and the impotence and the slavish type remain.
The dead are still our masters, and a power from the tomb
Can shape the characters of men, their conduct and their doom.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

Elena's Song

QUOTH tongue of neither maid nor wife
To heart of neither wife nor maid,
Lead we not here a jolly life
Betwixt the shine and shade?

Quoth heart of neither maid nor wife
To tongue of neither wife nor maid,
Thou wagg'st, but I am worn with strife,
And feel like flowers that fade.

SIR HENRY TAYLOR.

A Missed Destiny

WEARY of life, but yet afraid to die,
Sated and soured too, he slowly sinks,
With genius, knowledge, eloquence and wit,
And all the gifts of fortune vainly given;
Some morbid ply that flaws the heart or brain,
Some strange infirmity of thought or will,
Has marred them all, nothing remains behind
But fragmentary thoughts and broken schemes,
Some brilliant sayings and a social fame
Already fading; but his mind is yet
Keen, clear, and vivid, though his nerveless will
Can never rise to action; so he ends—
The eagle's eye without the eagle's wing.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

The Seekers

FRIENDS and loves we have none, nor wealth nor blessed abode,
But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road.

Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace of mind,
For we go seeking a city that we shall never find.

There is no solace on earth for us—for such as we—
Who search for a hidden city that we shall never see.

Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the wind, and the rain,
And the watch fire under stars, and sleep, and the road again.

We seek the City of God, and the haunt where beauty dwells,
And we find the noisy mart and the sound of burial bells.

Never the golden city, where radiant people meet,
But the dolorous town where mourners are going about the street.

We travel the dusty road till the light of the day is dim,
And sunset shows us spires away on the world's rim.

We travel from dawn to dusk, till the day is past and by,
Seeking the Holy City beyond the rim of the sky.

Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth nor blest abode,
But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

Work without Hope

ALL Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

'He found his work, but far behind'

HE found his work, but far behind
Lay something that he could not find:
Deep springs of passion that can make
A life sublime for others' sake,
And lend to work the living glow
That saints and bards and heroes know.
The power lay there—unfolded power—
A bud that never bloomed a flower;
For half beliefs and jaded moods
Of worldlings, critics, cynics, prudes,
Lay round his path and dimmed and chilled.
Illusions passed. High hopes were killed;
But Duty lived. He sought not far
The 'might be' in the things that are;
His ear caught no celestial strain;
He dreamed of no millennial reign.
Brave, true, unhoping, calm, austere,
He laboured in a narrow sphere,
And found in work his spirit needs—
The last, if not the best, of creeds.

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY.

The Unattainable Ideal

UPON the downs when shall I breathe at ease?
Have nothing else to do but what I please?
In a fresh cooling shade upon the brink
Of Arden's spring have time to read and think,
And stretch and sleep, when all my care shall be
For health and pleasure, my philosophy?
When shall I rest from business, noise and strife,
Lay down the soldier's and the courtier's life,
And in some little smiling melancholy seat,
Begin for shame at last to live and to forget
The nonsense and the farce of what the fools call great?

SIR GEORGE ETHEREGE.

Written at an Inn at Henley

TO thee, fair freedom! I retire
From flattery, cards, and dice, and din;
Nor art thou found in mansions higher
Than the low cot, or humble inn.

'Tis here with boundless power I reign;
And every health which I begin
Converts dull port to bright champagne;
Such freedom crowns it, at an inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!
I fly from falsehood's specious grin!
Freedom I love, and form I hate,
And choose my lodgings at an inn.

Here, waiter! take my sordid ore,
Which lackeys else might hope to win
It buys, what courts have not in store;
It buys me freedom at an inn.

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE.

The Patriot

An old Story.

IT was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day!

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, 'Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!'
They had answered, 'And afterward, what else?'

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

THE PATRIOT

There 's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
'Paid by the World,—what dost thou owe
Me?' God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay! I am safer so.

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Moral Bully

YON whey-faced brother, who delights to wear
A weedy flux of ill-conditioned hair,
Seems of the sort that in a crowded place
One elbows freely into smallest space;
A timid creature, lax of knee and hip,
Whom small disturbance whitens round the lip;
One of those harmless spectacled machines,
The Holy-Week of Protestants convenes;
Whom schoolboys question if their walk transcends
The last advices of maternal friends;

Whom John, obedient to his master's sign,
Conducts, laborious, up to *ninety-nine*,
While Peter, glistening with luxurious scorn,
Husks his white ivories like an ear of corn;
Dark in the brow and bilious in the cheek,
Whose yellowish linen flowers but once a week,
Conspicuous, annual, in their threadbare suits,
And the laced high-lows which they call their boots,
Well mayst thou *shun* that dingy front severe,
But him, O stranger, him thou canst not *fear*!

Be slow to judge, and slower to despise,
Man of broad shoulders and heroic size!
The tiger, writhing from the boa's rings,
Drops at the fountain where the cobra stings.
In that lean phantom, whose extended glove
Points to the text of universal love,
Behold the master that can tame thee down
To crouch, the vassal of his Sunday frown;
His velvet throat against thy corded wrist,
His loosened tongue against thy doubled fist!

The Moral Bully, though he never swears,
Nor kicks intruders down his entry stairs,
Though meekness plants his backward-sloping hat,
And non-resistance ties his white cravat,
Though his black broadcloth glories to be seen
In the same plight with Shylock's gaberdine,
Hugs the same passion to his narrow breast
That heaves the cuirass on the trooper's chest,
Hears the same hell-hounds yelling in his rear
That chase from port the maddened buccaneer,
Feels the same comfort while his acrid words

Turns the sweet milk of kindness into curds,
Or with grim logic prove, beyond debate,
That all we love is worthiest of our hate,
As the scarred ruffian of the pirate's deck,
When his long swivel rakes the staggering wreck!

Heaven keep us all! Is every rascal clown
Whose arm is stronger free to knock us down?
Has every scarecrow, whose cachectic soul
Seems fresh from Bedlam, airing on parole,
Who, though he carries but a doubtful trace
Of angel visits on his hungry face,
From lack of marrow or the coins to pay,
Has dodged some vices in a shabby way,
The right to stick us with his cut-throat terms,
And bait his homilies with his brother worms?

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Rich and Poor;

or, Saint and Sinner.

THE poor man's sins are glaring;
In the face of ghostly warning
He is caught in the fact
Of an overt act—
Buying greens on Sunday morning.

The rich man's sins are hidden
In the pomp of wealth and station;
And escape the sight
Of the children of light,
Who are wise in their generation.

The rich man has a kitchen
And cooks to dress his dinner;
  The poor who would roast
  To the baker's must post,
And thus becomes a sinner.

The rich man has a cellar
And a ready butler by him;
  The poor must steer
  For his pint of beer
Where the saint can't choose but spy him.

The rich man's painted windows
Hide the concerts of the quality;
  The poor can but share
  A cracked fiddle in the air,
Which offends all sound morality.

The rich man is invisible
In the crowd of his gay society;
  But the poor man's delight
  Is a sore in the sight,
And a stench in the nose of piety.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

To ——

WE, too, have autumns, when our leaves
  Drop loosely through the dampened air,
When all our good seems bound in sheaves,
  And we stand reaped and bare.

TO ——

Our seasons have no fixed returns,
  Without our will they come and go;
At noon our sudden summer burns,
  Ere sunset all is snow.

But each day brings less summer cheer,
  Crimps more our ineffectual spring,
And something earlier every year
  Our singing birds take wing.

As less the olden glow abides,
  And less the chillier heart aspires,
With drift-wood beached in past spring-tides
  We light our sullen fires.

By the pinched rushlight's starving beam
  We cower and strain our wasted sight,
To stitch youth's shroud up, seam by seam,
  In the long arctic night.

It was not so—we once were young—
  When Spring, to womanly Summer turning,
Her dew-drops on each grass-blade strung,
  In the red sunrise burning.

We trusted then, aspired, believed
  That earth could be remade to-morrow—
Ah, why be ever undeceived?
  Why give up faith for sorrow?

O thou, whose days are yet all spring,
  Faith, blighted once, is past retrieving;
Experience is a dumb, dead thing;
  The victory 's in believing.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

The City in the Sea

LO! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine,
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie,
In each idol's diamond eye,—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene!

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

Ode to Tranquillity

TRANQUILLITY! thou better name
Than all the family of Fame!
Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
To low intrigue, or factious rage;

For oh! dear child of thoughtful Truth,
To thee I gave my early youth,
And left the bark, and blest the steadfast shore,
Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,
On him but seldom, Power divine,
The spirit rests! Satiety
And Sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,
Mock the tired worldling. Idle Hope
And dire Remembrance interlope,
To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind:
The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead
At morning through the accustomed mead;
And in the sultry summer's heat
Will build me up a mossy seat;
And when the gust of Autumn crowds,
And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,
Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,
Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,
To thee I dedicate the whole!
And while within myself I trace
The greatness of some future race,
Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present works of present man—
A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

XVII

DE SENECTUTE

Some of life's sad ones are too strong to die,
Grief doesn't kill them as it does the weak,
Sorrow is not for those who sit and cry
Lapped in the love of turning t'other cheek,
But for the noble souls austere and bleak
Who have had the bitter dose and drained the cup,
And wait for Death face fronted, standing up.

Terminus

IT is time to be old,
To take in sail :—
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said : 'No more !
No farther spread
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs : no more invent,
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There 's not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two;
Economize the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still plan and smile,
And, fault of novel germs,
Mature the unfallen fruit.
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
Bad husbands of their fires,
Who, when they gave thee breath,
Failed to bequeath
The needful sinew stark as once,

The Baresark marrow to thy bones,
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins,—
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.'
As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unarmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed.'

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

A Farewell to Arms

(*To Queen Elizabeth*)

HIS golden locks Time hath to silver turned;
O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing.
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen.
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
And lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms;
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are Age his alms:
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,—
'Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Curst be the souls that think her any wrong.'
Goddess, allow this aged man his right
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

GEORGE PEELE.

To Age

WELCOME, old friend! These many years
Have we lived door by door:
The Fates have laid aside their shears
Perhaps for some few more.

I was indocile at an age
When better boys were taught,
But thou at length hast made me sage,
If I am sage in aught.

Little I know from other men,
Too little they from me,
But thou hast pointed well the pen
That writes these lines to thee.

Thanks for expelling Fear and Hope,
One vile, the other vain;
One's scourge, the other's telescope,
I shall not see again:

Rather what lies before my feet
My notice shall engage.—
He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat
Dreads not the frost of Age.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Of the Last Verses in the Book

WHEN we for age could neither read nor write,
The subject made us able to indite;
The soul, with nobler resolutions decked,
The body stooping, does herself erect.
No mortal parts are requisite to raise
Her that, unbodied, can her Maker praise.

The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er;
So calm are we when passions are no more;
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that Time has made;
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home:
Leaving the Old, both worlds at once they view
That stand upon the threshold of the New.

EDMUND WALLER.

Eldorado

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

'The Chief'

(*Lord Lister*)

HIS brow spreads large and placid, and his eye
Is deep and bright, with steady looks that still.
Soft lines of tranquil thought his face fulfil—
His face at once benign and proud and shy.
If envy scout, if ignorance deny,
His faultless patience, his unyielding will,
Beautiful gentleness and splendid skill,
Innumerable gratitudes reply.
His wise, rare smile is sweet with certainties,
And seems in all his patients to compel
Such love and faith as failure cannot quell.
We hold him for another Herakles,
Battling with custom, prejudice, disease,
As once the son of Zeus with Death and Hell.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

Staff-Nurse: Old Style

THE greater masters of the commonplace,
Rembrandt and good Sir Walter—only these
Could paint her all to you: experienced ease,
And antique liveliness and ponderous grace;
The sweet old roses of her sunken face;
The depth and malice of her sly grey eyes;
The broad Scots tongue that flatters, scolds, defies,
The thick Scots wit that fells you like a mace.
These thirty years has she been nursing here,
Some of them under Syme, her hero still.

STAFF-NURSE: OLD STYLE

Much is she worth, and even more is made of her.
Patients and students hold her very dear.
The doctors love her, tease her, use her skill.
They say 'The Chief' himself is half-afraid of her.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner

I HAD a chair at every hearth,
When no one turned to see,
With 'Look at that old fellow there,
'And who may he be?'
And therefore do I wander now,
And the fret lies on me.

The road-side trees keep murmuring
Ah! wherefore murmur ye,
As in the old days long gone by,
Green oak and poplar tree?
The well-known faces are all gone
And the fret lies on me.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

Song from 'Empedocles'

FAR, far from here,
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea, and in the brakes.
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.

And there they say, two bright and agèd snakes,
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
In breathless quiet, after all their ills.
Nor do they see their country, nor the place
Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills.
Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes.
They had stayed long enough to see,
In Thebes, the billow of calamity
Over their own dear children roll'd,
Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
For years, they sitting helpless in their home,
A grey old man and woman; yet of old
The gods had to their marriage come,
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days
In sight of blood; but were rapt, far away,
To where the west wind plays,
The murmurs of the Adriatic come
To those untrodden mountain lawns; and there
Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
And all that Theban woe, and stray
For ever through the glens, placid and dumb.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Farewell to Italy

I LEAVE thee, beauteous Italy! no more
From the high terraces, at even-tide,
To look supine into the depths of sky,
Thy golden moon between the cliff and me,
Or thy dark spires of fretted cypresses
Bordering the channel of the Milky Way.
Fiesole and Valdarno must be dreams
Hereafter, and my own lost Affrico
Murmur to me but in the poet's song.
I did believe (what have I not believed?),
Weary with age, but unoppressed by pain,
To close in thy soft clime my quiet day
And rest my bones in the mimosa's shade.
Hope! Hope! few ever cherished thee so little
Few are the heads thou hast so rarely raised;
But thou didst promise this, and all was well.
For we are fond of thinking where to lie
When every pulse hath ceased, when the lone heart
Can lift no aspiration—reasoning
As if the sight were unimpaired by death,
Were unobstructed by the coffin-lid,
And the sun cheered corruption! Over all
The smiles of Nature shed a potent charm,
And light us to our chamber at the grave.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Growing Old

WHAT is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forgo her wreath?
Yes, but not this alone.

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more weakly strung?

Yes, this, and more! but not,
Ah, 'tis not what in youth we dream'd 'twould be!
'Tis not to have our life
Mellow'd and soften'd as with sunset glow,
A golden day's decline!

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirr'd;
And weep, and feel the fullness of the past,
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young.
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none.

It is—last stage of all—
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

On his Seventy-fifth Birthday

I STROVE with none; for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

DEATH stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

'Say not of me'

SAY not of me that weakly I declined
The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,
To play at home with paper like a child.
But rather say: *In the afternoon of time*
A strenuous family dusted from its hands
The sand of granite, and beholding far
Along the sounding coasts its pyramids
And tall memorials catch the dying sun,
Smiled well content, and to this childish task
Around the fire addressed its evening hours.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Lines

Read at the Dinner given in Honour of Doctor Robert Fletcher at Maison Rauscher, Washington, January 11, 1906.

IF age means but the sum of leaves
Time's calendars unfold,
Our honoured guest must recognize
That he is rather old.

If youth means elasticity,
A ready wit and tongue,
A mind alert, a spirit gay,
He's eminently young.

If age means stores of learning ranged
On ordered shelves along,
Still crescent 'neath the nurture
Of a guardian sage and strong,

LINES

All centred in an index
  Which is hidden in the brain,
Our friend has surely reached an age
  We may not see again.

If youth betrays itself by vim,
  And broken bones, soon healed,
A constant tendency to pry
  In every secret field;

By always leading in the van
  Of life's long search for truth—
Why then, despite his years, he's but
  The prototype of youth!

So here's a glass to four score years,
  To ripe and wise old age,
To all the gains which gen'rous time
  Scores on his record page;

And here's a glass to fervid youth,
  To supple limbs and mind
Wherein hope's rainbow arches o'er
  All doubts that lower behind;

And here's a health to him in whom
  All these conditions meet,
Old in all virtues born of days,
  Young where'er youth is sweet.

Long may he live to taste alike
  Of age and youth the joys;
Old, yes, in years, but in his heart
  A boy among the boys!

William Sydney Thayer.

Waiting

SERENE, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For, lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it hath sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder heights;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delights.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave comes to the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

XVIII

DIVINA MORS

Mais si rien ne répond dans l'immense étendue
Que le stérile écho de l'éternel désir,
Adieu, déserts où l'âme ouvre une aile éperdue !
Adieu, songe sublime, impossible à saisir !
Et toi, divine Mort, où tout rentre et s'efface,
Accueille tes enfants dans ton sein étoilé ;
Affranchis-nous du temps, du nombre et de l'espace,
Et rends-nous le repos que la vie a troublé.

Sola nel mondo eterna, a cui si volve
Ogni creata cosa,
In te, morte, si posa
Nostra ignuda natura ;
Lieta no, ma sicura
Dell' antico dolor.

To die is landing on some silent shore,
Where billows never break, nor tempests roar :
Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 'tis o'er.
The wise through thought th' insults of death defy,
The fools through bless'd insensibility.
'Tis what the guilty fear, the pious crave ;
Sought by the wretch and vanquished by the brave.
It eases lovers, sets the captive free,
And, though a tyrant, offers liberty.

Nature

AS a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wished to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

The Deserted House

LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they!

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Verses found in his Bible at the Gate-House at Westminster

EVEN such is Time, which takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God will raise me up, I trust.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

Up-Hill

DOES the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

The City of the Dead

THEY do neither plight nor wed
In the city of the dead,
In the city where they sleep away the hours;
But they lie, while o'er them range
Winter blight and Summer change,

And a hundred happy whisperings of flowers.
No, they neither wed nor plight,
And the day is like the night,
For their vision is of other kind than ours.

They do neither sing nor sigh
In that burg of by and by,
Where the streets have grasses growing cool and long,
But they rest within their bed,
Leaving all their thoughts unsaid,
Deeming silence better far than sob or song.
No, they neither sigh nor sing,
Though the robin be a-wing,
Though the leaves of Autumn march a million strong.

There is only rest and peace
In the City of Surcease
From the failings and the wailings 'neath the sun.
And the wings of the swift years
Beat but gently o'er the biers,
Making music to the sleepers every one.
There is only peace and rest;
But to them it seemeth best,
For they lie at ease and know that life is done.

RICHARD BURTON.

The Land o' the Leal

I'M wearing awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.

THE LAND O' THE LEAL

There 's nae sorrow there, John,
There 's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn 's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John;
And O! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy 's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that 's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear 's that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
O dry your glistening e'e, John!
My saul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

O haud ye leal and true, John!
Your day it 's wearin' through, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare ye weel, my ain John,
This warld's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
In the land o' the leal.

CAROLINA, LADY NAIRNE.

Novissima Verba

O BUT they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention like deep harmony:
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain.
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain.
He that no more must say is listened more
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose;
More are men's ends marked than their lives before:
The setting sun, and music at the close,
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
Writ in remembrance more than things long past.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Epitaph

HE roamed half round this world of woe,
Where toil and labour never cease;
Then dropped one little span below,
In search of Peace.

And now to him mild beams and showers,
All that he needs to grace his tomb,
From loneliest regions, at all hours,
Unsought-for come.

AUBREY DE VERE.

A Wish

I ASK not that my bed of death
From bands of greedy heirs be free;
For these besiege the latest breath
Of fortune's favoured sons, not me.

I ask not each kind soul to keep
Tearless, when of my death he hears;
Let those who will, if any, weep!
There are worse plagues on earth than tears.

I ask but that my death may find
The freedom to my life denied;
Ask but the folly of mankind,
Then, then at last, to quit my side.

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,
The friends who come, and gape, and go;
The ceremonious air of gloom—
All, that makes death a hideous show!

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head and give
The ill he cannot cure a name.

Nor fetch, to take the accustomed toll
Of the poor sinner bound for death,
His brother doctor of the soul,
To canvass with official breath

The future and its viewless things—
That undiscovered mystery
Which one who feels death's winnowing wings
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Bring none of these! but let me be,
While all around in silence lies,
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more before my dying eyes

Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aërial landscape spread—
The world which was ere I was born,
The world which lasts when I am dead.

Which never was the friend of *one*,
Nor promised love it could not give,
But lit for all its generous sun,
And lived itself, and made us live.

There let me gaze, till I become
In soul with what I gaze on wed!
To feel the universe my home;
To have before my mind—instead

Of the sick-room, the mortal strife,
The turmoil for a little breath—
The pure eternal course of life,
Not human combatings with death.

Thus feeling, gazing, let me grow
Composed, refreshed, ennobled, clear;
Then willing let my spirit go
To work or wait elsewhere or here!

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

DIVINA MORS

Vitae summa brevis Spem nos vetat incohare longam

THEY are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

ERNEST DOWSON.

Pasteur's Grave

NO cypress-shadowed churchyard, nor the gloom
Of haunted cloisters, doth immortalize
The dust of him, whose patience proved more wise
To save, than Death to slay. The busy loom
Glancing with silk, the teeming herd, the bloom
Of purpling vineyards, and the grateful eyes
Of souls reprieved at Death's most dread assize,
Shall make eternal gladness round his tomb.

Not 'mid the dead should he be laid asleep
Who wageth still with Death triumphant strife,
Who sowed the good that centuries shall reap,
And took its terror from the healer's knife;
Defender of the living, he shall keep
His slumber in the armoury of life.

ALFRED HAYES.

Fragment of Chorus of a 'Dejaneira'

O FRIVOLOUS mind of man,
Light ignorance, and hurrying, unsure thoughts,
Though man bewails you not,
How I bewail you!

Little in your prosperity
Do you seek counsel of the Gods.
Proud, ignorant, self-adored, you live alone.
In profound silence stern
Among their savage gorges and cold springs
Unvisited remain
The great oracular shrines.
Thither in your adversity
Do you betake yourselves for light,
But strangely misinterpret all you hear.
For you will not put on
New hearts with the inquirer's holy robe,
And purged, considerate minds.

And him on whom, at the end
Of toil and dolour untold,
The Gods have said that repose
At last shall descend undisturbed,
Him you expect to behold
In an easy old age, in a happy home;
No end but this you praise.

CHORUS OF A 'DEJANEIRA'

But him, on whom, in the prime
Of life, with vigour undimmed,
With unspent mind, and a soul
Unworn, undebased, undecayed,
Mournfully grating, the gates
Of the city of death have for ever closed—
Him, I count *him*, well-starred.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

From 'The Garden of Proserpine'

PALE, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;

DIVINA MORS

Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Prospice

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle 's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old;
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,
And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace, then a joy,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

ROBERT BROWNING.

The Last of All

WHETHER it 's Heaven—or whether it 's Hell—
Or whether it 's merely Sleep ;
Or whether it 's something in between
Where ghosts of the half-gods creep—
Since it comes but once—and it comes to all—
On the one fixed, certain date—
Why drink of the dregs till the Cup arrives
On the grey day set by Fate ?

One by one till the line is passed—
The gutter-born—and the crown ;
So what is a day—or a year or two—
Since the answer 's written down ?
What is a day to a million years
When the last winds sound the call ?
So here 's to the days that rest between—
And here 's to the last of all !

GRANTLAND RICE.

'*Come, lovely and soothing death*'

COME, lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise ! praise ! praise !
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

'COME, LOVELY AND SOOTHING DEATH'

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress!
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee,—adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death.

WALT WHITMAN.

Life

LIFE! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me 's a secret yet.
But this I know, when thou art fled,
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
No clod so valueless shall be,
As all that then remains of me.
O whither, whither dost thou fly,
Where bend unseen thy trackless course,
And in this strange divorce,
Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?

To the vast ocean of empyreal flame,
From whence thy essence came,
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
From matter's base encumbering weed?
Or dost thou, hid from sight,
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
Through blank oblivious years th' appointed hour,
To break thy trance and reassume thy power?
Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?
O say what art thou, when no more thou 'rt thee?

Life! we 've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good-morning!

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD.

Requiem

UNDER the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Last Lines

NO coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere;
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void;
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

EMILY BRONTË.

The Rising Tide

AN idle man, I stroll at eve,
Where move the waters to and fro;
Full soon their added gains will leave
Small space for me to come and go.

Already in the clogging sand
I walk with dull, retarded feet;
Yet still is sweet the lessening strand,
And still the lessening light is sweet.

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

Vesperal

I KNOW the night is near at hand.
The mists lie low on hill and bay,
The autumn sheaves are dewless, dry;
But I have had the day.

Yes, I have had, dear Lord, the day;
When at Thy call I have the night,
Brief be the twilight as I pass
From light to dark, from dark to light.

S. Weir Mitchell.

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